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[THE WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING.]

## THE FOOT TICKLER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Evelyn's Plot," "Darcy's Child," "One Sparkle of Gold," &c., &c.

### CHAPTER I.

Art thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers?

Oh, sweet content!

Art thou rich, yet is thy mind perplexed?

Oh, punishment!

Dost thou laugh to see how folk are vexed

To add to golden numbers golden numbers?

Oh, sweet content!

The vast theatre of San Carlos, at Naples, was filled to overflowing.

A favourite opera was graced by a new prima donna, young, lovely, and gifted.

The Italians are ever *fanatici pella musica*. Thus it was not surprising that the loggias, the pit, the amphitheatre were simply crammed to excess on such an occasion, and that the thronging crowd ignored, as it seemed, in its density and preoccupation, the individuals who composed its mass.

Yet, in spite of the overwhelming force that such numbers exert in crushing every attempt to distinguish each atom of its crowd, there were those in the magnificent building whose claims to distinction were too irresistible to be thus disregarded.

The loggias were full of lovely, elegant women, whose toilets were in themselves a study for an artist. The arena and stalls were crammed with men whose air and mien bespoke rank, fashion—ay, and in some cases musical talent.

But pre-eminent among them were a brilliant and dazzling few who at once obtained and appeared to despise admiring notice, and of the latter number was a young man of some eight-and-twenty years of age or perhaps less, of strikingly handsome features and figure, and with a peculiarity of expression in his finely cut features that of itself riveted attention to their owner.

The large, stag-like eyes were soft and melting

almost to feminine tenderness, the lips had an habitual sweetness almost amounting to a smile on their rich red fulness, which was deepened into bewitching, tender gaiety when the regular white teeth that graced the mouth were exposed to view. Still there was a slight sinister, troubled keenness of look in the "background," so to speak, that well nigh destroyed the charm and the confidence the apparent softness might have given.

At his side was a companion of a good though not uncommon type of Italian manhood, who regarded the whole scene, both on the stage and in the boxes, with time-hardened equanimity that could appreciate unmoved alike syren *prime donne* and lovely *débütantes* or experienced queens of beauty.

He had been watching the direction of the eyes of the remarkable Englishman above described with a critical smile on his moustached lip, nor was he at all moved to even transitory emotion when the handsome foreigner turned sharply round in an interval of the acts with the low but excited query:

"Lesano, for Heaven's sake tell me who is that beautiful girl?"

The Italian shrugged his shoulders.

"Which of them? I am looking on a legion of angels, though perhaps not of saints," he replied, cynically. "Do you mean on the stage or in the loggias?" he added more seriously as he saw the indignant flash of his companion's eyes.

"Idiot!" came half inaudibly from the throat of the Englishman. Then in a more conventional tone he said aloud:

"My dear Lesano, surely you must be jesting. As if there could be any doubt in the matter. The fair Norma di Albano is already too well known to fame for even a tyro to be perplexed as to her identity. Remember that although this is her first night on the boards of San Carlos her reputation has been wafted on rumour's breath, and her lovely face perpetuated by artists in every variety of form and costume. And as to her colleagues they are but foils, not even worth a second glance or second thought."

"Then may I ask a more intelligible definition of

the beauty in question than a vague attribute of that which she shares with half her sex?" calmly returned the count. "My dear Villiers, excuse me, but we Southerners are either more or less discriminating in our admiration than you are," he went on. "There are a hundred women here to-night whom I could at a breath conjure into fame. And," he muttered, "wave the wand in the other direction also. But *n'importe*. Show me who it is that has thus excited your enthusiasm, Mr. Villiers," he continued, with a jesting smile that thinly covered a sharp, sarcastic curiosity beneath.

Eustace Villiers was not blind to the veiled irony. There were few secrets that were effectually and perfectly concealed from his penetrating gaze; but he did not seem to heed the slight, and his own tone was gay and light as he replied:

"I scarcely would do you such injustice as to fancy you needed any guidance as to the handsomest girl in the house, my good count. Just raise your eyes to my left, nearly in a line with the stalls in which we are sitting, and you will be enlightened."

The count did obey the direction indicated, and with suspicious readiness fixed on a young girl who was seated, or rather half reclining, in a large, luxurious lounge, and listening with a sad yet placid smile to the low-spoken remarks of her sole companion in the box, a man somewhat past middle age and of undoubted aristocracy and high breeding in appearance and mien.

"Well, you have shown both discrimination and blindness in your election of a belle," returned the count, coolly turning his lorgnette from the spot in question. "Irene Delancy is certainly about the loveliest girl in all Naples—perhaps scarcely to be surpassed in Italy, though the fair Norma might very well contest the palm with her. But then she has a hopeless, unconquerable obstacle to any admiration she might attract. No *bella passione* will ever be laid at her shrine in reverent homage."

"Why not?" asked Eustace, eagerly. "Is she base born?—but no; that is impossible with that high-bred air and those refined features."

"She is the daughter of a rich baronet of your own country—his only child," was the cool reply.

"Then she is not portionless, that is a certain inference," returned the perplexed Villiers.

"On the contrary, I presume she will be an heiress," said the count, shrugging his shoulders. "But she is blind or nearly so."

"Good Heavens, what a fearful calamity!" exclaimed Eustace, eagerly; "was she born so? No, it is an impossibility—she has too complete an air of intelligence and grace."

"You are right. She has only recently become so. It was, I believe, the effect of a fever, but it is considered hopeless," said the count, coolly.

"What an affliction! And the father, what says he?" inquired the Englishman, his eye still fixed on the fair afflicted *aveugle*.

"He is of course in despair—so much so indeed that he would willingly reward with even half his fortune the man who would cure his child. Indeed, it has already been attempted by several, but in vain. And I scarcely think it will be again risked."

Eustace Villiers did not reply.

His eyes were riveted on the exquisite face of the girl in question, with a critical as well as admiring expression.

It was little wonder that his attention was so absorbed, for a more perfect specimen of blonde loveliness never met mortal eyes.

A skin of such exquisite transparency that the pure blood seemed to glow in its delicate and lovely rose pink gave an air of unusual youthfulness to delicate and perfectly moulded features, while the unfortunate eyes that were so terribly afflicted by the sad and malady were large, opal, deep-blue orbs, curdained by long brown lashes of a darker hue than the masses of fair golden brown hair.

The throat, the exquisite shoulders, the perfectly turned head, were all simply faultless in their grace, and the slight shade of sadness over the lovely features only added interest to their attractiveness.

Eustace drew a long breath as he turned away, but he made no reply.

Perhaps the resumption of the performance and the breathless stillness with which it was greeted might have accounted for his silence.

Norma's voice, antiseptic, were indeed entrancing, and the thunders of applause that followed her performance were almost deafening from the long-continued vigour with which they were bestowed.

When the opera was over the box of Sir Hugh Delancy was empty.

It could not avail for the sightless one to remain for the ballet, however graceful and fascinating, and Eustace Villiers shared the repugnance, as it appeared, for he too disappeared during a brief absence of his companion. The count when he returned shrugged his shoulders at the empty void thus left.

"Bah!" he muttered, "like his countrymen, to sink away without a word. Bah! perhaps he has gone to gaze at the fair Irene's window. Ha, ha! It would be rare sport if he were to walk into the snare. The bride of the handsome Villiers—ha, ha, ha! yes—that will be a grand jest for Naples."

But the curtain drew up for the ballet, and the Italian abandoned himself to the fascinating display of the graceful danseuse.

Meanwhile Eustace Villiers turned his steps through the winding streets and lanes of the fair city of the South till he reached a tall and imposing mansion, from which a small but well-appointed *residence* was being driven at the moment.

He entered the large, marble-paved hall, and with a familiar nod to the porter, who made no attempt to interrupt his progress, he hastened up the wide, imposing staircase that might best be a palatial hall.

The first and second landings were passed.

Then he stopped at a door, which was apparently the portal of a suite of apartments, for as he placed a pass key in its lock it revealed a small passage, from which again opened two or three doors of different chambers, one of which stood partly open, and revealed a scene of rich and elegant refinement and luxury.

The marble floor was relieved by rich squares of carpet, artistically disposed, so as to form a kind of mosaic in the ground, the furniture and hangings were of rich crimson velvet, relieved by soft lace, and the whole scene was garnished and glittering with massive mirrors, candelabra, statues of Parian whiteness, and a few rare pictures that were each worth an Italian's income to purchase and needed an Italian's talent to paint.

But the most attractive part of this Oriental-like scene was the fair tenant of the apartment, who in truth was none other than the lovely and gifted queen of the night, the worshipped *prima donna*, the young cantatrice who had taken the musical world by storm, the young Norma D'Albano.

She had already thrown off her dazzling attire, and

assumed a *negligé* that was more bewitching than the most elaborate toilet.

Her black hair flowed in wavy profusion over the snowy shoulders, from which the scarlet mantle had fallen carelessly back, betraying also the pure round whiteness of her bare arms, from which the brilliant bracelets had not yet been unclasped.

The cheeks were flushed from excitement or some more hidden feeling, and her dark eyes absolutely blazed from beneath the veil of the long lashes that curtained them.

She half lay, half crouched on a low *fautail* that from her own capricious fancy was almost as low as a pile of Eastern carpets might have been.

Eustace Villiers stood gazing through the half-open door with a curious expression on his features that partook alike of admiration and cynical bitterness, yet it was difficult to imagine what could bring aught but warm and gentle feelings in the gaze at that exquisite picture, when half Naples would have sacrificed fortune, rest—ay, and fame itself—to have obtained an entrance to that charmed spot, where he seemed to exorcise a privileged claim.

A slight rustle, perhaps the very sighing of his deep-drawn breath, arrested the girl's attention. She glanced towards the door like a startled fawn, and the next moment Eustace entered the room and was at her side.

A flush of pleasure gleamed for a moment from the girl's brilliant eyes.

Then she averted them from the contact with his and drew away from him the hand he would have clasped.

"Norma, my queen, what means this?" he asked, leaning forward to catch a glimpse of her fair face. "Is my darling ill?"

No reply but the heaving of her full bosom that panted heavily in the silence.

"Dearest, I cannot endure this silence, this estrangement," he went on. "Surely it must be that the excursions and excitement of the night have been too much for my beloved one's nerves. Yet she might bestow one glance, one smile on her devoted worshipper," he added, pressing his arm lightly round her slender waist.

She sprang indignantly from his touch.

"Eustace, you are false, deceitful! I hate you!" she exclaimed, passionately. "How dare you come here to-night?"

He gave a half-smile, that fortunately the girl did not perceive, as he replied, deprecatingly:

"How dare I come here, my Norma? Why, because it is my right, because my precious one has had a triumphant ovation this night, and I would be the first to offer my humble congratulations and whisper that her glory is reflected upon him to whom she has vowed faith, to whom she belongs as a precious possession."

She listened with a smile such as "Norma" might have bestowed on her false lover.

"Then, if it be so, proclaim it at once, Eustace. Let the world know that I have a protector, that I am not to be exposed to insult and licence, and that you are bound—bound to me, and me alone." "Then I will believe you, not else—not else," she repeated, restlessly, stamping her small foot and clasping her hands with nervous agitation.

"Norma, my precious one, this is more folly and madness," he replied, deprecatingly. "Were it even suspected that you, the very idol of crowds, the queen of song, the divinity about whom all Italy—ay, Europe—will soon be moving, had already made your choice and your coveted heart, why, half, nay more of your success, your brilliant career would be dimmed and destroyed. You would be coldly looked upon as one beyond the intoxicating homage of thousands, because you were the property of one. I—I should be a mark for enmity, for envy—perhaps even for death, my Norma."

The coral lips were slightly parted to show a small row of white ivory teeth, and her eyes were eagerly fixed on his.

"Eustace, you are trifling with—deceiving me. Such things could not be."

He shrugged his shoulders with a mournful shake of the head.

"Sweetest, you are too young and inexperienced to even dream of the workings of this wicked world. I tell you that men have been murdered for far less cause in this passionate land. I should be hounded by foes—deadly to a—and even were I to escape their malice I should have my—I mean our prospects marred at home. The family to which I belong, and from which I have so much to expect, would cast me off, and my bright hopes of placing rank and luxury at my darling's feet be destroyed. Norma, my love, I would desire to take my fair wife to my splendid home and offer her all, without taxing her genius and strength as they are taxed now. Can you not see my heart's longings, dearest?" he continued, drawing her towards him.

And she, though half resisting, did not recoil as at first from his caresses.

"Eustace, if you loved as I do such thoughts would never occur to you," she murmured, her head half drooping on his shoulder. "Mine would be yours and yours mine. There would be no division where hearts are one."

"My darling, you are a woman—I a man. You know not what agony it costs me to receive from you the hard earnings of your genius, even though I know it will all be abundantly repaid," he returned, with drooping eyes and quivering lips. "But what can I do? I am bound, helpless from this iron bond."

The girl looked quickly at him. There were glistening tears in those splendid eyes of his that seemed master of every varying expression that could move the human heart.

"Eustace, Eustace, do not degrade me by such unworthy ideas," she cried, impetuously. "It is yours, yours—all yours. Why do I value the gold that pours into my lap? Only for you. Why do I glow at the applause that rings in my ears? Only for your sake, and because I think it makes me more worthy of your love. Eustace, why not give up those ambitious dreams? I have enough and more than enough for both. Look round; this is no unworthy home for my beloved—my husband, Eustace."

Her head was buried in his bosom, and the last words were whispered in a scarcely audible murmur. Yet had her eyes been raised to his she would have shrunk from the gust of passion that hovered over his face.

"Hush, hush! walls have ears, dearest," he said, deprecatingly, "but tell me, if you are really my own devoted, loving little Norma, what meant the cold reception I had but now. Such cold, averted looks as those you gave me then are small guarantee for trusting in your love, fair-empire."

He felt her shiver in his arms.

"Eustace, I do not like to think of it; it well nigh drove me mad. Who was that fair-haired, insipid girl to whom you were so riveted at the theatre? I saw your eyes ever on her. Eustace, I am not to be trifled with," she added, fiercely. "My love would be qualified only by my revenge were I deceived."

He gave a light, careful laugh.

"My little sensitive simperton," he returned, lightly. "So I was to be punished for the pity that I have learned to feel for any of my Norma's sex. Did you not perceive that the unfortunate blonde girl to whom my attention was directed was blind—hopelessly blind? And it was this strange phenomenon in one so young, one whose eyes were apparently so free from disease, that riveted my gaze, as you declare. Yet," he continued, tenderly, "even that was a delusion when my whole soul was devoted to my beloved, my eyes feasting on her beauty, my ears eagerly drinking in her magic melody and the shouts of applause it called forth."

His own voice was soft and melodious as the liquid murmurings of a cooing dove, it was like angels whispering to the heart of that passionate, impetuous girl.

"Oh, Eustace, forgive me," she murmured, throwing her arms round his neck. "I was suspicious, jealous—unjust. But it is because I love you as my own soul, because night and day I have your image in my heart, because I could not live without you, Eustace. Oh, in mercy do not try me by such a fearful pang. It would be ruin for both, Eustace."

Her arms were round him, her head upturned, her large eyes pleading up to his, and the cloak she wore falling back revealed the faultless form.

It would have been more than man to resist such love and beauty combined.

"Hush, hush! do not speak of such folly, such treason against our love," he returned, bending over her and kissing her flushed cheek. "I am your own true Eustace—your worshipper, your slave."

"Say my husband," she whispered in his ear.

His lips moved.

Perhaps he obeyed, and the magic words came on the panting girl's senses.

At any rate her head lay drooping on his bosom, her eyes closed as if in exhaustion after the late excitement, and for some minutes all was hushed silence in the apartment.

Eustace seemed to be soothing the restless and fevered nerves as his hand passed lightly and regularly over her brow. His eyes were sharply surveying the fair form that lay in his arms, or, at least, something riveted his attention there.

A diamond locket of inestimable value, from the size and water of its stones, had escaped its fastening and lay entangled in the bodice of her dress.

Eustace paused—his hand trembled as it waved over the spot, before it ventured to grasp the bauble.

He bent down and listened.

Norma was sleeping calmly as a tired infant.

He made one quick snatch at the small chain, and the next moment the jewel was in his own keeping,



and his watchful care renewed over the slumbers of the unconscious one.

#### CHAPTER II.

Trim thy locks, look cheerfully.  
Fate's hidden ends eyes cannot see  
Life as winged dreams flies fast.  
Why should sadness longer last?  
Grief is but a wound to love.  
Gentlest fair one, mourn no more.

"How is my Irene this morning," asked Sir Hugh, tenderly, as the blind girl, in whose very life his was wrapt up, came slowly into the room where he sat on the day after that opera night.

She had learned to avoid many of the perils of her affliction, had that sweet, graceful creature, and she resolutely declined all guidance, save where the scene was utterly strange to her.

So, as she glided gently into the apartment, and placed herself on the couch by her father, with those large blue eyes fixed tenderly on him, it was difficult indeed to believe that the doom of darkness rested on the beloved and beautiful one.

"Oh, I am well, papa. At least I have not slept much," she said; "that music was so exquisite, it sounded in my ears and mingled in my dreams. I never heard such a voice; it went to my heart. Do you say she is lovely, papa?" continued the girl, placing her hand in Sir Hugh's and nestling up to him like a child.

"Yes, my love; she seemed so to me. Only I can scarcely think that there is any face fair and bewitching save my Irene's," he returned, tenderly. "Still she was, I mean she is very handsome—dark and brilliant, and like a true daughter of the South. She and my Irene are like night and day," he added, smiling. "But why do you ask, my love?"

"Oh, I do not know. Only since I have been blind I always form some image of those with whom I come in contact. I can only be guided by the voice and the touch, you know, papa. And her voice, this Norma's, is glorious, heavenly. I shall not rest till I hear it again. Oh, if I could but—"

"But what?" asked her father, sadly.

"Nay, it is wrong, ungrateful to say it," she said, sweetly. "I have all else, I am sinful to complain, and yet sometimes it is almost more than I can bear," she exclaimed, with an irresistible burst of emotion. "Never to see the light of Heaven, the fair face of nature, the faces I love, the books, the paintings that I used to live in—oh, papa, it is hard, even when you make me so happy with your love and care."

Poor Sir Hugh!

His own eyes were full, his very frame trembling, his heart sinking at this rare outburst that told too plainly the suffering of her who was his sole object in life.

He clasped her in his arms.

"My child, my child, would that I could suffer for thee, die for thee," he exclaimed, passionately. "Irene, no sacrifice that I could make should be refused, no humiliations, no loss shrank from could I restore thee to light and happiness and joy."

The words were scarcely out of his lips when the girl started from his embrace and listened to some distant sound.

Her sharpened senses had caught the approach of footsteps before her father's duller ears, and in a few seconds more the door opened and a domestic appeared.

"If you please, Sir Hugh, a gentleman wishes to see you at once," he said, with a half-perplexed air. "A gentleman! What name? Do you not know him?" asked the baronet.

"No, Sir Hugh. At least I have seen him, for he is not to be easily forgotten after once you've placed eyes on him," returned Pedro. "However, he told me to give you this card, and to say that his business was urgent, most urgent, though he was a stranger to you."

The card he handed to his master bore on it the simple words "Eustace Villiers, Villa Campana."

The name was honourable, the very aspect of the card bore "gentleman" in its stamp, and Sir Hugh's first impatient scruples yielded by degrees.

"Did you tell him I was engaged," that I had not even breakfasted?" resumed the baronet, doubtfully.

"Of course, Sir Hugh," replied the man, with a half-piqued air. "He said he would wait your leisure and that you should not be detained longer than you wished on the business which brought him here."

"My Irene, what shall I do?" asked the father, whose whole will appeared to be merged in the pleasure of his idolized child.

"Go, dear papa. I shall breakfast more quietly when this impetuous visitor is dismissed," said the girl. But I am so silly now," she added, with a sigh. "I feel nervous and excited at the least unusual occurrence. Surely it is no omen of evil that I spent such a troubled night, was it, darling father?"

"My sensitive flower," murmured Sir Hugh, kissing the upturned, anxious young face with an affecta-

tion of gaiety. "Even Italian sunshine does not avail to guard you from the light breeze. Perhaps it makes you more susceptible of its passing sighs. But my precious one must nerve herself for my sake against such needless fancies. There, lie there—listen to that calm plash of oars and boatmen's song while I am gone. I will not be away many minutes."

And gently placing her against the soft cushions of the couch near the open window, through which the soft breeze and musical sounds of the beautiful bay were streaming with soothing melody, he hastily left the room.

Sir Hugh was perhaps infected with his daughter's nervous presentiment, or else his own strong brain was weakened by the trial that wore away his very life, for he paused at the door of the library where the stranger awaited him ere he could muster resolution to open it and to encounter the interview which was so strangely and so urgently solicited.

But at last with an impatient shrug at his own folly, and a clearing of the throat, which spoke of an oppressed breathing of the laboured heart, he turned the handle and stood in the presence of the handsome and aristocratic-looking stranger.

"Sir Hugh Delancy, I presume," said the visitor, with a bow that had an indescribable mingling of grace and self assumption in it that unconsciously conveyed an idea of some superiority which was not easily to be resisted.

"The same," returned the baronet, coldly, "and," he added, glancing at the card he held in his hand, "I suppose I am addressing Mr. Villiers—possibly some relative of the old English family of that name."

The stranger smiled rather scornfully.

"I may safely reply in the affirmative," he returned, "for in truth my father was by no means distantly related in blood to the noble house to which you allude. But he left England before my birth, and I consider myself a citizen of the world, since my life and fortune and attainments are all owing to other climes than that of my ancestors. But all this is idle, save indeed to prove to you that I am not a poverty-stricken impostor or charlatan in the errand which brings me hither."

Sir Hugh bowed and pointed with a sort of embarrassed courtesy to a seat, while he himself took the large, easy reading-chair that was more especially his own.

There was something in the aspect and manner of the stranger that at once fascinated and awed him.

Yet what could there be in the presence of one English gentleman to alarm or daunt another, especially when that other was as thoroughly well bred, wealthy and unstained in reputation as Hugh Delancy?

"May I beg you to state the business which has brought me the honour of this visit?" he said, seeing that the stranger did not immediately begin the conversation. "I have an invalid daughter who is even now waiting for our morning meal," he added, "which I must plead as my excuse for impatience."

"I am aware of it, Sir Hugh," returned the guest, calmly. "I know that you have indeed an only daughter, who is at once the chief joy and whose happiness is the chief aim of your life—and it is of her I came to speak."

"Of her?" repeated Sir Hugh, coldly. "Mr. Villiers, pardon me, but I am not accustomed to have my domestic privacy intruded upon, neither do I desire that Miss Delancy's name should be brought into idle gossip or even invoke undesired sympathy from a stranger."

"Then I have been misinformed," said the guest, calmly. "I was told that Sir Hugh Delancy would give all his wealth to restore to his afflicted daughter the blessing of sight; now he seems to spurn the aid that is offered for the removal of his sore affliction."

Sir Hugh started painfully as if the very idea brought to his mind memories of excited hopes and bitter and varied disappointments and sufferings.

"I will believe that you mean well, Mr. Villiers," he said, after a pause. "Nay, I can scarcely doubt the motives of one who can surely not betray the traditions of an honourable race and an English name. But it is too painful a subject, and too hopeless for me to enter upon with a stranger. If you know what successive tortures she and I have endured, the penalties that I have been forced in self-defence to inflict, you would not wonder at my bitterness of spirit. My Irene's affliction is incurable, and only love and patience can avail to soften its severity. I will return to her if you will permit the discourtesy," he added, rising.

It was strange that where such tremendous stakes were in question, where a worshipped child's very life was in the balance, that he should thus summarily decide on rejecting all aid.

But Sir Hugh answered as if in the presence of an unearthly visitor, though he resolutely controlled the outward evidence of the emotion, and he panted

to relieve himself of the shadow that seemed to darken the very sunshine in the apartment.

Eustace Villiers however did not rise in obedience to the dismissal thus tacitly expressed.

His face wore a look of pitying superiority as he surveyed the baronet's disquieted movements with a calm, unflinching gaze.

"Sir Hugh, were I an ordinary man I should at once depart and punish the discourtesy or distrust that you evince by leaving you to your blind infatuation. But for Miss Delancy's sake I will forbear from such a natural impulse. She, at least, scarcely deserves the fearful penalty of perpetual darkness because her father rejects the certain remedy that would bring her light and joy and love."

Sir Hugh paused in the step that he was already taking towards the door.

"Mr. Villiers," he said, half-piteously, "this is simple torture. I dare not believe your hints, I have been so often, so cruelly deceived—and she, my darling, is so fragile she cannot bear the suspense and the excitement. It would kill her were she again to suffer the fearful revulsions of hope and disappointment. I will believe you are honourable," he went on, with a hurried agony of tone that might well excite the sympathy even of a foe. "Nay, I am grateful to you even for the wish, the offer, but your only proof of pitying interest is to leave us in peace."

Eustace had risen during the words with a total change of manner. He discarded the cynical haughtiness, the cold impassibility of mien, and stood before his host with earnest, clasped hands, and eyes which could so well convey the most unflinching truth and fearlessness, albeit such qualities could hardly have been read in their natural expressions.

"Sir Hugh," he said, in a tone of deep feeling, "be entreated, be warned against this rash resolve. Think of her, so beautiful, so good, so young, with an angel's loveliness and attractions, with woman's passionate, clinging love, with woman's eager enthusiasm for all that is fair and sweet and joyous in this bright earth, this beautiful world. Will you condemn her to lifelong misery? I tell you," he added, almost fiercely, "that I, at any rate, would endure torture, would lay down my own life for such a being as you thus cruelly disregard."

"You, then—you know her?" asked the father, jealously. "Yet I never saw you before, and she—no, she could have no secrets from me. She cannot have—"

"Met me," returned Eustace, calmly, "without your knowledge, Sir Hugh? Certainly not. She would scarcely forgive such an insinuation even from you. Miss Delancy has never heard my voice, and, alas! as you must know, can never have seen my features. But yet I have vowed to devote my very life to her with all the skill and wondrous secrets that I have gained in other lands. Sir Hugh, I can restore her to sight. I pledge you my solemn word that the secret is in my keeping that will chase away the shadow from those lovely eyes. And, if you will, I am ready to endure any penalty on failure you are induced to propose, if you in your turn will grant the terms of success."

Sir Hugh could scarcely doubt the sincerity of the stranger in his passionate outburst; yet still that strange, thrilling distrust chilled his very blood.

"What are your terms?" he said, in a low, hesitating tone. "I may perhaps judge more correctly when I have heard their demands."

Eustace gave a low, light laugh.

"Sir Hugh," he said, "you have wealth and rank, and, I have been told, have offered vast sums for the cure of your afflicted child. I despise them all. They are too poor to purchase the talisman I possess, the gift I hold of that best blessing of Heaven—its light and beauty and sun."

"Then what—why do you come to offer what I have not wealth to buy?" asked the baronet, sadly.

"Is there naught else?" said Eustace, in a low, earnest tone. "Sir Hugh, do you suppose that men have no passions save cupidity, no enjoyment save of gold and lands and luxury? Is there no such motive as love?" he whispered, in a low, hissing tone in the father's ear.

Sir Hugh sprang back as if a bullet had struck him.

"Love, man! Are you mad?" he exclaimed, his eyes glazing as if a sudden delirium had seized his brain.

"Not I. Are you, Sir Hugh?" was the calm reply. "You seem to ignore the attractions your daughter possesses. I have felt them and I can win their possession, or leave them unappreciated by mortal man. I am her equal in birth. I will stake my existence on my power to win her by the boon I can bestow. Sir Hugh, it is for you to accept or reject the bargain."

He sat down once more with folded arms and a knitted brow that spoke of the working emotions within, and the baronet instinctively quailed beneath the power of that strong, unflinching will.

"Mr. Villiers, you can scarcely be serious, or else have forgotten our English customs," he said, at last, in a deprecating tone. "Our daughters are not bought and sold like Continental damsels, and if my precious child is to be sacrificed in an odious and unloving marriage she had better endure her present trial than such misery."

Eustace smiled scornfully.

"You would impose hard terms, Sir Hugh, but I will grant that the attributes of your daughter may well excite the severest test you can inflict. One fair and young and richly dowered as she is must indeed be won by no ordinary exertions or deeds of noble daring and skill. Listen once again to my conditions. I will engage to gain Miss Delancy's heart, to draw her whole soul towards me, to induce her earnest, maidenly consent to my suit, as well as to restore to her the priceless boon of sight, if you on your part will promise to give her, the fair heiress of your race, the core of your heart, the very treasure of your eyes, to me as my bride."

Sir Hugh sank down on the chair which he had quitted and covered his eyes with his hand. It was a sore contest, which nothing but despair could have induced. He, the proud descendant of an ancient race, the possessor of wealth and lands, was called on to give the very jewel of that line, the heiress of the broad estates of many a hard-earned victory and noble deed, to an unknown stranger, a presumptuous aspirant for the prize. Irene, whom nobles might have contended for, was to be calmly yielded to a nameless, landless, and wandering adventurer. But for what? For the greatest blessing that Heaven could give or man restore. To what would avail wealth, rank, beauty to the blind Irene Delancy?

The father's heart panted under the terrible contest, till at length a ray of light illumined its gloom.

"Mr. Villiers, I will yield thus much to your earnest pledges, your solemn vows. I will present you to my daughter, give you the chance of becoming known to her, of winning her good will, her heart if you can, on this one condition. Should she refuse, or should you fail, you will still be bound to fulfil your pledge and to devote your life to her happiness. Are you prepared for this?"

Eustace smiled triumphantly.

"Sir Hugh, I have no such craven fear. Present me to your fair Irene, and ere many weeks are gone she shall be my grateful and rejoicing bride."

(To be continued.)

#### ARTIFICIAL FLOWER MAKING.

THIS is an interesting and beautiful branch of decorative art, which is destined ere long to be more highly appreciated, because better understood. By its means we are enabled to obtain the most truthful and pleasing imitations of nature; and the uses to which it is and may be applied are numerous. It affords aid to the sculptor, painter and designer, is suitable for museum studies, and adapted to all interior decorations.

In imitating flowers in paper the chief aim is to produce a portrait of the required object, and in order to be enabled to do this a constructive knowledge of flowers and an acquaintance with the material and tools necessary for their imitation are all that is required to enable a person to copy most of the floral favourites. The material, or paper, upon which most of the success depends should be of a good colour, thin, soft, and strong, and, as a rule, highly glazed papers should be avoided. The proper tools, cheap and few in number, with the other essentials, are easily obtainable at any artificial florist's. In studying this pleasant and interesting art the pupils would find it advantageous to at first purchase the various parts of a few simply constructed flowers ready-made for use, and, having a perfect copy before them, endeavour to put the said parts together in their proper order, so as to make complete flowers. By this means they would not only obtain an insight into their construction but a manipulatory knowledge or a readiness in handling both the material and the tools. When they have thus attained a certain amount of proficiency they should next take the natural flower as their only guide and instructor, and strive to imitate its component parts, such as the petals, calyx, stamens, etc., so as to produce facsimiles of the originals. In order to do this it is necessary to obtain patterns of the proper form and size of the petals, etc., of the flower proposed to be copied. These are obtained from the natural flower in the following manner: When the flower consists of only two-sized petals each petal is placed on thin cardboard; their edges being then carefully traced round with a pencil. It is usual in cutting out the patterns to allow a little additional length for fixing them. Should the petals be more than two, but of a like size, as in the passion flower, it is best to select one petal, and, having traced it on paper, as before described, proceed to cut out the exact number; then arrange them on cardboard so as to represent the particular

design required. Sometimes there is a thickness of texture in the natural flower which is imitated by placing a piece of waxed muslin between two sheets of paper.

Most flowers require more or less painting in order to give them a more natural tint, and, as practice from the natural flower enables the student to form the most correct method of obtaining the patterns for each particular case, so will practice from the natural flower only enable the student the more correctly to imitate nature's painting. W. J. S.

#### I HAVE TRIED TO CALL HER MOTHER.

I HAVE tried to call her mother

Since the day when first we met;

But she is not like another—

One I never can forget—

Who is 'neath the roses sleeping,

With the cold earth for her bed,

Where the dew-gemmed ivy's creeping

Out amid the silent dead.

I have tried to call her mother,

But I cannot, cannot yet;

For she is not like another,

And my heart will ne'er forget.

I have tried to call her mother,

Since she took that loved one's place;

She is kind to little brother,

And he loves her smiling face;

But were she a loving angel,

With a soul too pure for earth,

She could not be like another,

Who has gained immortal birth.

I have tried to call her mother,

She is good and pure and true;

But my heart yearns for another,

Whom in blissful days I knew;

Yet I feel a tender pity

For this friend whom He has given,

But I cannot love her fondly—

I've a mother dear in Heaven.

O. L.

#### SCIENCE.

**ARTIFICIAL EYES.**—A French paper gives a detailed account of the manufacture of false eyes in Paris, from which the curious fact appears that the average sale per week of eyes intended for the human head amounts to 400. One of the leading dealers in this article carries on the business in a saloon of great magnificence; his servant has but one eye, and the effect of any of the eyes wanted by customers is conveniently tried in this servant's head, so that the customer can judge very readily as to the appearance it will produce in his own head. The charge is about 50 francs per eye. For the poor there are second-hand visual organs, which have been worn for a time and exchanged for new ones; they are sold at reduced prices, and quantities are sent off to India and the Sandwich Islands.

**CLEANING PICTURES.**—It is stated that a new process of cleaning pictures has been discovered. The great difficulty has always been to get off the old varnish, which by length of time has become almost incorporated with the colour underneath, so that any method employed to remove the upper surface is pretty certain to carry off with it the delicate lines below. Some picture dealers use corrosive substances, which make the matter worse. An ingenious system has been discovered at Amsterdam, which consists in simply spreading a coating of copahu balsam on the old painting, and then keeping it face downwards over a dish of the same size filled with cold alcohol at an altitude of about three feet. The vapours of the liquid impart to the copahu a degree of semifluidity, in which state it easily amalgamates with the varnish it covers. Thus the original brilliancy and transparency are regained without injuring the oil painting, and when the picture is hung up in its place again two or three days after it looks as if it had been varnished afresh. The inventors have given the public the benefit of their discovery. The process has the merit of being a short one as compared with the old methods.

**REMARKABLE MAGNETIC STORMS AND AURORAS IN EUROPE.**—On October 14th and 15th last a brilliant aurora borealis was observed in Paris. At Brest, at 10h. 34m. on the evening of the 14th, the magnetic storm burst. M. Sureau, who was at the time closely watching the needle of the galvanometer, which was gently oscillating between 2 and 3 degrees, saw it leap suddenly to 25 degrees. All the working apparatus was suddenly attacked, and all the sounding machinery instantly set in motion, making a deafening noise, while the electro magnets were strongly excited. It was also remarked that the currents acting on the telegraphic wires of Brest were directed from west to east. During October 16th, 17th and 18th the disturbances in the telegraphs became gene-

ral throughout France and probably through the greater part of Europe. The telegraphic service in France was thrown into complete disorder, necessitating the forwarding of the telegrams for Italy through the mails. These perturbations, which lasted three days, were of a totally different character from those of the 14th and 15th of the same month. They were nothing more than instantaneous contacts, derangements analogous to those produced by mixing the wires; there were no longer the prolonged contacts and well-defined waves which accompanied the polar auroras. With the disturbances throughout nearly the whole of Europe appeared violent storms with thunder and lightning, which, in connection with a great barometric depression in Spain and in the south-western portions of the Continent, together with an exceptionally chilly temperature, have been remarked as extraordinary cosmic phenomena.

**WHAT IS SLATE, AND HOW WAS IT FORMED?**—That slate may have been once mud is made probable by the simple fact that it can be turned into mud again. If you grind up slate and then analyze it you will find its mineral constituents to be exactly those of a very fine, rich, and tenacious clay. Wherever the top of the slate beds and the soil upon it are laid bare the black layers of slate may be seen gradually melting, if I may use the word (says the Rev. Charles Kingsley, in "Town Geology"), under the influence of rain and frost, into a rich, tenacious clay, which is now not black like its parent slate, but red, from the oxidation of the iron which it contains. But, granting this, how did the first change take place? It must be allowed at starting that time enough has elapsed and events enough have happened since our supposed mud began first to become slate to allow of many and strange transformations. For these slates are found in the oldest beds of rocks, save one series, in the known world; and it is notorious that the older and lower the beds in which the slates are found the better—that is, the more perfectly elaborate—is the slate. The best slates of Snowdon (I must confine myself to the districts which I know personally) are found in the so-called "Cambrian" beds. Below these beds but one series of beds is as yet known in the world, called the "Laurentian." They occur, to a thickness of some 80,000 feet, in Labrador, Canada, and the Adirondack mountains of New York; but their representatives in Europe are, as far as known, only to be found in the north-west highlands of Scotland and in the island of Lewis, which consists entirely of them. And it is to be remembered, as a proof of their inconceivable antiquity, that they have been upheaved and shifted long before the Cambrian rocks were laid down "unconformably" on their worn and broken edges.

**BORACIC ACID AS A PRESERVATIVE FOR MILK AND BEER.**—Boric acid has lately come largely into use in Sweden for the preservation of milk, and a mixture of equal parts of this acid and alum has been applied for the preservation of meat, as well as for improving its appearance when discoloured by packing in oaken barrels. The former is being sold under the name of aseptic, the latter as double aseptic. Hirschberg has lately made experiments in order to ascertain the precise value of the acid for the purposes described. In June, 1871, he dissolved fifteen grains and a half pulverized boric acid in two pounds fresh milk, and kept it at a temperature of 54 deg. F., and for purposes of comparison he left some pure milk in the same room. This was tested at intervals of 6 hours; after 96 hours a very slight acid reaction was noticed; this did not become plainly visible till 120 hours had passed. The milk containing no boric acid indicated a slight acid reaction after only 36 hours, and a strong acidity after 48 hours. The cream separated completely from the latter in 48 hours, while on the former only very little was found even after 120 hours. From these experiments it seems that boric acid may be considered a very effective preservative of milk. A similar experiment was made with beer. On October 7th, 1871, fifteen and a half grains of this substance were dissolved in a bottle of lager beer, brewed on August 30th, and the same quantity was dissolved in beer brewed on October 2nd. Both bottles were left loosely corked in a temperature of 56 deg. F. Both kinds indicated a slight acidity, owing to carbonic acid, which was present before the boric acid had been dissolved in them. This reaction remained after the addition without increase for a week. From October 14th to November 15th the beer was left at a temperature varying from 35 deg. to 63.5 deg. F., whereupon it became opalescent; but still no increase in acidity could be perceived (although, as has been stated, the bottles had been only loosely corked), but it was no longer fresh. The opalescence disappeared again after the bottles had been allowed to stand in a room with a constant temperature of 63.5 deg. F., but the beer was not spoiled till the end of the month. It remains to be seen whether boric acid is similarly useful in the hot summer weather.





[UNDER THE BRIDGE.]

## THE SECRET OF SCHWARZENBURG.

### CHAPTER XXVIII.

'Tis true that we are in great danger;  
The greater therefore should our courage be.

*Shakespeare.*

SURROUNDED by that circle of armed men—the unprincipled, mercenary tools of a fierce and lawless master—and confronted by the determined, angry face of the prince himself, the faithful old servitor of Schwarzenburg yet stood unflinchingly, without a single thought of yielding.

“Do you understand that this is no child’s play—no womanish whim?” vociferated the prince. “It is treason for you to refuse, and the penalty is death, and not a short or easy one either. Old man, do you understand all this?”

Wirt Womberg shook his gray head slowly.

“I only understand that it will be wicked and cowardly for me to break my solemn oath. I do not understand that my sovereign will allow one of his subjects, however humble, to be thus rudely assailed. If I am guilty of any wrong doing, it is the law that should try and punish me—the law that the king approves and endorses. More than this I do not know or understand.”

The prince gnawed savagely at his lips.

“See if you can quicken the old idiot’s faculties into understanding what is required of him, Hernberg,” said he, motioning to one of his ruffians—a significant gesture which ended with his hand on the dagger at his side.

Von Schubert laid his hand lightly upon his arm, and whispered, anxiously:

“Your royal highness will pardon me if I beg you to consider a moment. This might be made to look like high-handed assumption by your enemies. Their representations to his majesty might produce much discomfort and annoyance for your highness.”

His hand was flung unceremoniously aside.

“Bah! I will take my own risks. A gray-headed old idiot—a menial! Do you think his cause would win against that of the throne’s heir? I tell you I will discover what this thing means. I will find the fugitive concealed here to-night, if it cost me everything!”

Von Schubert, greatly disturbed and alarmed, went over to Womberg, and spoke to him persuasively.

“Womberg, my good fellow, don’t tempt them to ill-usage. You are an old man, and cannot bear it. If there is such a place, lead on to it. There cannot be any harm in breaking a promise to dead-and-gone

Schwarzenburgs. There are none left now. You are absolved from the oath by their death. Give me a single hint, and I will save you.”

The old man’s trembling hands were raised to push back the long, silvery locks that dropped low upon his forehead, but his bright, resolute eye looked unflinchingly back, and his steady, determined voice answered, calmly:

“They may hack me to pieces, or burn me to a crisp, if such things be allowed to transpire here, but little will they gain by it. There is no power on earth able to compel me to speak. Heaven be praised! so much of manhood we are given from above; and kings and princes cannot hinder, if only our own wills are strong!”

“Away with him, and give him ten minutes’ grace!” shouted forth the prince.

One of the housemaids gave a frightened sob.

“Oh, Wirt, Wirt, why don’t you tell? The door is somewhere in the picture gallery—I know it is; for I saw you go in once, and, when I followed, I could not find you. It was always a mystery, but now I see through it. Tell them, oh, tell them, Wirt Womberg, before you are harmed.”

The prince whirled round upon her with an impetus that made her shrink back in new terror.

“In the picture gallery? Well told, Hernberg, drag the old man thither.”

And in a few moments more the whole party were transferred to the gallery, and the flaring lamps sent strange shades and flashes dancing across the stony, impassive faces of the dead-and-gone Schwarzenburgs.

Hernberg, with slow and severe scrutiny, followed his master’s hasty strides, and carefully sounded the walls and examined every panel between the pictures. Brave old Womberg stood with quiet dignity, although a rough hand was laid on either shoulder, his head drooping, his eyes carefully averted from following the movements of search.

The prince paused every now and then to fling him a flaming glance, but learned nothing to help the investigation.

When his subordinate came back from a fruitless but careful and thorough examination he could no longer restrain his wrath.

He made a sudden plunge, and, dagger in hand, confronted the poor old man, shouting at the top of his voice:

“Lead the way! Open the door of the secret passage, or you have sealed those obstinate lips of yours for ever.”

Wirt Womberg met the fierce assault unflinchingly.

“I can die, but I will not break my oath, nor fall in my loyal duty to a Schwarzenburg,” he answered, proudly.

With a muttered imprecation the prince glanced along the row of watchful, attentive, and startled faces to read if he might venture upon the dastardly blow.

His arm fell slowly while an evil sneer curled his lips.

“One can afford to wait,” he muttered; “a punishment that is studied out carefully falls more heavily than the stoutest blow.”

“It is only the punishment of Heaven that true men need to fear,” retorted Wirt Womberg, fearlessly.

At this moment Hernberg laid his hand on the shoulder of the prince, and the latter withdrew a few steps with him, while the man whispered:

“If your highness will try stratagem, and allow me to manage it, ten to one but we will find that secret passage in an hour. Leave the man alone here and he will try to escape by it.”

It was difficult for that fiery, undisciplined nature to forego his wrath even in dissembling, but after an instant’s reflection he answered:

“Be it so. I leave you to manage it. But, mind you, I shall not tolerate failure.”

“Will your highness order a watch to be set so that there can be no possible egress from the building outside?” continued Hernberg, in the same whispered tones.

“Von Schubert, come hither,” commanded the prince, stalking away out of the gallery.

And one by one the crowd of startled lookers-on followed suit, until old Wirt stood alone with his two captors.

They remained beside him, casting expectant, uneasy glances toward the door, where presently Hernberg appeared, and spoke, hastily:

“Come on, leave him there, and one of you guard the door, I want the other. We are pretty sure we have found the clue below.”

The men obeyed promptly.

One came out, closing the door behind him, but taking care not to latch it.

The other, in answer to Hernberg’s gesture, walked away downstairs, his steps echoing behind him noisily.

Hernberg himself remained motionless, watching cautiously through the narrow aperture for every movement of the prisoner.

Wirt Womberg drew himself up, wiped his forehead, and glanced slowly along the gallery, and then seemed to turn his head to listen. Then he moved

a step or two forward, and paused again. The poor old man's thoughts were indeed perturbed and anxious. What should he do? Not for himself. It was not his own danger that made his heart beat so tremulously. But how should he warn and save the new-found mistress, the undreamed-of son, to whom the loyal old heart bowed in respect and devotion? This was the problem that disturbed Wirt's mind, for he had heard Aubrey's story, and had already made his visit to the secret room of the hidden passage-way. Even if able to warn them how could he help them make sure of escape, when, as he well knew, the hirelings of the prince kept watch around the building—nay, had spies established on every roadway?

Nevertheless something must be done. Well enough he knew a closer investigation would reveal the secret door, and he had full faith in the prince's declaration that the place should be found though it required the very walls to be torn asunder.

Slowly the old man moved on, pacing the full length of the gallery, and every well aware that a keen eye watched through that tiny crack of the door. Now he stretched out a listless hand to the wall, and now he bent close to a pictured face, but all the time with the aimless air of preoccupied thought.

Hernberg watched breathlessly, every moment expecting to see some secret spring respond to the deft touch of a familiar hand, and scarcely daring to trust his eyes, even for a wink, lest they should lose the sight.

Slowly paced Wirt Womburg, and came towards the door where they waited and watched. He folded his arms as he approached, and wore a grave, abstracted look, but his mind was made up at last, and his movements all arranged.

Idiot as well as knaves! did they think an old servant, born and brought up beneath that old roof, would forget any advantage the place offered? Did they fail to guess the bolt on the inner side would bar out, as well as their key would lock in?

He came on slowly, with that seeming listless indifference, but when he reached the door Wirt gave a sudden leap, closed it, and shot the bolt into its socket. Then with flying steps he ran to the secret spring, and pushed with desperate haste, while he heard Hernberg's loud and angry exclamations.

The door opened to him its dim retreat, but the old man paused to throw up the nearest window.

"Let them think I leaped forth, if they are simple enough," he muttered, and with noiseless steps he made his way into the secret passage, and carefully closed the panel behind him.

Once there, he lost no time in hurrying down to the little room, where, so short a time before, he had made a comfortable bed for the beloved mistress who seemed indeed miraculously restored from the dead.

She started up nervelessly at the sound of the flying feet.

"My lady, oh, my lady!" sobbed the faithful old man, all his calmness breaking down at a realization of her great peril, "you must fly! The prince is here! Somehow he has learned of your presence and this secret entrance. He is searching even now to find it. He has sworn to tear the very walls apart to discover it. Come, oh, come! amidst the darkness we may escape somewhere; but to remain here is to be sure of falling into his hands."

She turned upon him her pale, bewildered face.

"The prince here! Oh, cruel fate! Does that explain the loud noise I heard? Are you sure he knows I am here, Wirt?"

"Alack, my lady! nothing can be more certain; and he is in a furious mood. I have myself escaped through the picture panel. Come! lose no time! They will break down the door. I fear they will discover this retreat."

She lifted one prayerful glance upward, then said, calmly:

"Let us hasten then! But first assure me that my son is safe. Alas! it is cruel to fly from the spot that holds this new-found treasure!"

Carl Koepfel had listened to this with sorrowful attention.

"Come!" said he; "every moment is precious. If it is as dim outside as when we entered, I have strong hope that we may leave the place without detection. The passage-way emerging under the bridge is a great safety. Would that we had tried it two hours ago!"

Wirt had seized his mistress's hand.

"Come, I beseech you! I will accompany you to the bridge, and return to give your son a hint concerning your destination."

They proceeded the rest of the way in silence, and at the outer entrance stood a long time listening for any sound before they dared emerge from the great iron doorway.

Close behind them all was still, but behind, up the

heights which the underground passage-way descended, they heard the confused din of voices and tramping of feet.

Wirt Womburg stepped forth first, and carefully mounted the great timber which ran along under the flooring of the bridge, just above the water. A strengthening support for the structure an ordinary observer would have believed it; but the old Schwarzenburg servant knew that it had served and been intended for quite another and as important a purpose. It was a safe and covered walk, across the river, and could only be reached by the two secret doorways; for a close network of iron pins and cross-beams prevented any stepping upon this timber from the outside, even were one in a boat upon the water.

Wirt held out one hand silently to his mistress, the other held the shoes he had removed from his feet. She also stepped upon the timber safely and noiselessly, and the aeronaut followed.

At a little distance above their heads was the sound of the sentinel's tramp. They passed on beneath him, scarcely daring to trust a lengthened breath.

They gained the end of the bridge, and the other door, through which alone was egress or entrance to the timbered walk.

There was then another underground passage to be traversed, wet and chilly, and full of noisome vapours, but fortunately short. In this they pushed through a tangled mat of briars, and stood on the river-bank something like three rods below the bridge.

Now there was no longer any protection for them. They stood upon the ground, out in the open air. Poor Wirt's heart beat fearfully, and he felt the fingers clenching his own grow icy-cold as the three stood for a moment listening.

"Hasten!" whispered Carl. "It is growing light already. The dawn must be approaching."

"Heaven bless you, Wirt Womburg!" said Lady Pauline, softly, and wrung his hand, then dropped it, and turned to follow Carl's lead.

"Halt!" rang out a sharp, commanding voice. "Who goes yonder? Halt! or I send a ball to bring you to a stop!"

The call was echoed from behind and before.

It was evident that a cordon of guards barred them from the road.

Wirt seized his mistress and ran back toward the bridge, and Carl followed in hot haste, but behind him came hurrying on the roused guard.

"It is our last desperate chance," ground out Wirt beneath his teeth; "there is nothing left but to return and bide what will come."

"Return! ever that is impossible!" thought poor Carl.

Fortunately the sentinel on the bridge mistook the shout for a call to him.

He left his post and went leaping over the river bank, while the fugitives were retracing their steps along the timber beneath, having no time now to soften the noise of their passage.

"In Heaven's name, man, did you forget to close the door behind you?" groaned Wirt when passing and breathless he gained the edge of the bridge and heard on the other side a confused and angry murmur of voices.

"Heaven only knows!" answered Carl, in utter despair. "I did my best, but the man was close upon me."

"Let us make sure of this at least," groaned Wirt as he carefully closed the heavy plank.

Then once more the three stood in the dark, damp passage-way.

"We are worse off than before, for we have given them proof of our presence and of this passage-way," sighed the aeronaut. "Now, indeed, our case is desperate."

"Heaven can save us even yet," spoke Lady Pauline, wistfully, but her voice trembled.

"Go on up into the chamber where your bed was prepared," said Wirt, "and try to rest even in such peril and anxiety, my lady. I will wait a little at this door and try to discover what they decide upon. I can hold it open a trifle and possibly hear the talk above. If that is useless I will go on up into the upper way and learn what is being done in the gallery."

It was in the latter place that there was the most confusion.

Hernberg had broken down the door, and the prince and all the troop were thumping and sounding at the walls.

Wirt could hear the fierce, high voice of the prince vociferating his fierce anathemas and his useless commands. He distinctly followed also the rapid speech of the sentinel who came in to report the attempted escape on the river bank.

"By my father's spectre this thing shall be ferreted out!" cried the wrathful leader. "Go on, Heröberg; pull down what and where you please. They are

here somewhere, and we have them cornered like rats in a hole. Double the guard outside at the point where you say they seemed to disappear into the ground. If you had not been half-witted some of you would have followed them. But we will have them yet. I will not leave this place till they are found."

"Your highness," interrupted a strange voice, "a courier has just arrived who has been scouring the country to find you, and has just traced you hither."

"A courier from whom?"

"From the court, your highness, with some important message."

"Show him in here to this spot," was the imperative command.

Then, after the sound of shuffling feet, came another message:

"Your royal highness, bringing you word from the palace. The king has been visited with another and alarming illness, and has called for you. They are all searching for your highness."

The obsequious tone betrayed the speaker's knowledge of how speedily his royal highness might be emerged into kingly majesty.

How many hearts there sank dimly also at the conviction.

"Confusion! How I am thwarted!" muttered the prince, impatiently, for, as he said, unscrupulous as he was, there were calls he dared not disobey. "I must go. I must ride out, and it may be impossible for me to return to-morrow, or even next day. Von Schubert, Hernberg, I hold your heads both responsible for any escape from this place of these prisoners of mine. Remember, though it is the prince who commands, the king may be the one to punish or reward."

"Whom does your highness leave in command?" asked Von Schubert's clear, cold voice.

"Of the place, yourself; of the prisoners, Hernberg. Get me a fresh horse, Max, and, Von Schubert, order me some wine. I have already been in the saddle for many hours, and there is still a long and tedious ride before me. It cuts me sorely to leave this thing unsettled, but there is no help for it. Keep good watch, Hernberg, and it may be possible I shall return to-morrow night to see your triumphant entry into the mysterious passage."

With this the prince took leave.

"Another day's grace," muttered the old servant of the Schwarzenburgs. "Oh, for ten—nay, five minutes' speech with the young master. I overheard a talk between Herr Von Schubert and the Lady Viola. I suspect he himself would almost be ready to help us. Oh, that I might obtain speech with some of them!"

(To be continued.)

## LORD DANE'S ERROR.

### CHAPTER LVII.

MEANWHILE, in France, that unhappy man, Volney, the true Lord Dane, had not drunk yet the cup of his misdeeds to the dregs.

He waited in the house No. 10, in the Rue Genevieve, the allotted two hours. He waited the first hour in a delirium of hope, almost believing his wife would come back as she had promised. After that the spirits of the morbid and misanthropic man began to sink again. At the expiration of the two hours he went out into the street without any vague purpose, only too miserable to endure the slow moments indoors.

As it chanced, the first man he saw was Monsieur Lampiere, the mad doctor, who had, after all, done more than any one to fill his days with horror and to embitter him toward his wife.

The wicked Frenchman, not satisfied with causing Volney to believe that his wife had contrived his incarceration in his precious asylum, had also fastened in his mind that jealousy of the man he still supposed to be Lord Dane which had always been there.

The sight of this man now startled Volney horribly. The villain quickened his pace as he recognized Volney, and advanced, smiling and cringing, to meet him. He hoped yet to make money out of him by restoring him for a price to the wife he knew was searching everywhere for him.

Volney felt his cheeks whiten at sight of this hated face; but it was not with fear. He stopped, and let him come till within three feet of him; then, with his right hand in the breast of his coat, he said, in a low and deadly voice, and with a deadly look in his eyes:

"I am armed, Monsieur Lampiere. Pass on. If you so much as look behind you, I will put a bullet through your head before you can look back again."

The Frenchman opened his small black eyes, stood an instant staring, and then, with a shrug of resignation, glided forward, passed Volney, and proceeded without turning his head, as ordered. At



the end of the street he wheeled swiftly with an evil laugh, thinking that he might do so safely, and that it was not too late to dog the steps of his former victim yet.

But he was mistaken. Volney had already hailed a *fiacre*, and entered it. No other vehicle was in sight in that remote quarter. Monsieur Lampiere had to confess himself beaten again. This Englishman had always been a losing game to him. Volney left the *fiacre* at the Luxembourg Gardens. He was in a desperately gloomy mood. The encounter with the Frenchman just when his wife had failed to come back to him had filled his mind with more than a return of the horrible thoughts he had had of her ever since Cheeny had said to him, in effect, in the madhouse in Normandy:

"Your wife sends you here. She thinks it preferable that you should be here rather than on public trial for the murder of her father."

He turned into one of the least frequented walks. He wanted to reflect calmly, if he could, on that strange interview so lately had with that lost but still so passionately adored Sybil. Had he dreamed that meeting, or had she indeed stood before him and told him those sweet, sweet falsehoods? Heavens! how lovely she had looked! He caught his breath with a sob as he thought how her white arms had clung round his neck, and how she had looked at him as she said:

"Your son and mine, Volney."

The miserable man threw himself upon a garden chair under one of the trees and covered his face with his hands.

"I'd be willing to die to have it true," he said to himself. "For me a wife—a child—I Earl of Dane!" He laughed aloud in scorn and bitterness, and getting up strode on again with his hat pulled over his contracted brows and his lips white and compressed.

Suddenly, at a turn in one of the walks, he ran against and nearly threw over a gentleman coming from the opposite direction.

For the third time that day that mysterious hand called fate by some, by others Providence, was extended to ruffle the waters of Volney's morbid existence. The gentleman he had nearly knocked over was M. Noisette, the polite Frenchman who had given Sybil Monsieur Volney's number.

Volney apologized. He had a slight acquaintance with M. Noisette.

M. Noisette in turn politely inquired if the English milord had found him, whereupon Volney, much amazed, eagerly questioned him concerning his knowledge of the lady.

M. Noisette knew a little about the beautiful English countess. He had often seen her and her husband driving together in the Bois.

Volney clenched his teeth and shivered:

"Her husband?"

What did that mean? Then he turned to M. Noisette again.

"Are you sure?" he asked; "her husband? I fancied my lady might be a widow?"

"Ah, yes," said the Frenchman, "she was a widow once. Then she married me more time. It is a mild story, not before. She is in black for her little boy. Ah, she is very lovely, very blonde!"

Volney almost gnashed his teeth at him.

"She is called what?" he asked, controlling himself with an effort. "I did not quite catch the name."

"La Comtesse Dane," replied M. Noisette, unsuspiciously; "ah, they are the fine pair, milord and she. Ah!"

Volney stayed to hear no more. He muttered something, and broke away from the voluble Frenchman almost at a run.

M. Noisette was merely a gossiping busybody. He had come as near the truth as those of his kind usually do.

"It is true, then," Volney rode away muttering. "She has married Talbot Dane. No wonder they want to keep me in the madhouse."

He stayed walking up and down for a long time. It was dark when he left the gardens, and he did not go back to his lodgings in Rue Genevieve.

"They have defied me, they have come of their own will and thrust their happiness in my face to mock me. I will meet them on their own ground. I will dare the worst. I will go back to England, and give myself up for trial. Better end it so than go on this way."

He set out for England immediately with this desperate resolve in view.

But on the way he fell ill, and at the same time that his wife was tossing with delirium, and calling frantically for him in Paris, he was lying also very ill at Calais. As he grew better the desire to carry out that determination of surrendering himself for trial was still strong upon him. He proceeded upon his journey the instant he could travel, and before he was fairly strong enough indeed.

He was in England—he was in London—that day when Talbot Dane and Perdita met after so long. He was lurking like a hunted criminal in the park

opposite Dane House when Dane came out, his face radiant with the happiness of that interview with the woman of his long worship. He left the vicinity as the day advanced, but he postponed giving himself up till the morrow. At nightfall he came back and took up his stand opposite Dane House again.

He had walked the streets recklessly all day. No one had addressed or recognized him so far as he knew. He half wished in his desperation and agony that some one would track him here and arrest him in sight of his lost wife.

That did not happen; but some time in the evening an elegant carriage drove round with the Dane liveries, and a party came out of the mansion and entered it. They were the Countess Sybil, Lady Perdita, Baron Chandos and Talbot Dane.

Volney saw only the two, Sybil and Talbot. If the whole city had been assembled before that door, if even the ghost of the dead Rupert Vassar had stood there, he would have seen only those two.

The party entered the carriage, the obsequious footman standing by.

To Volney's jaundiced eyes it was only the Earl and Countess of Dane who drove away gay, prosperous, and happy, untroubled by a thought of him who had cheated them both and lost himself.

He sat down on one of the benches inside the park railing, and his head dropped upon his bosom.

"I have done wrong to come here with the purpose I did," he muttered, darkly, to himself.

"Whatever they may do I deserve it. Why did I ever start on that deceitful road? I might have known it could only end as it has. I will sit here till they come back. I will get one more glimpse of her face, perhaps, and then—London Bridge is not so far. That way I will end it all. She may not hate me so intensely when I am gone. I should like her to know I was out of her way, and by my own act at last. Shall I write to her? I might, I will. I can give the letter in at that door yonder as soon as they are all fairly in."

The unhappy man had got so far in his despairing soliloquy when a man and woman came brushing hurriedly by him, both talking as fast as they could make their tongues go.

Volney caught but one intelligible sentence. It dropped from the man's lips.

"Any one can see that his little lordship fills his mother's heart completely."

Volney started up from his half-crouching position, his pulses throbbing wildly, a sense almost of suffocation on him, as he watched the man and woman disappear within Dane House. They were servants evidently. Did they belong there? Who did they mean by "his little lordship"? Was it, could it be Sybil's child? Once more his wife's words came to him:

"Your son and mine, Volney."

He began to tremble violently. On a sudden impulse he leaped the park railing, crossed the street, and rang boldly at the carved portal of Dane House.

A footman instantly opened to him.

"Can I see Lord Dane?" he asked.

The man stared.

"Not at this hour, sir, I think."

"Why not?"

The powdered footman stared again. Something familiar struck him in the air and mien of this strange questioner, but he did not recognize him, neither did he reply to his demand impertinently, strangely as it struck him.

"His lordship has retired," he answered, respectfully.

Volney looked at him a moment. The man thought he had never seen such unhappy eyes.

"Lord Dane just left this house—I saw him drive away," Volney said, sternly—he and the countess," he added, with a terrible effort.

The man stared again; then he said:

"I may be mistaken, sir, but I think his lordship never goes out with his mamma in the evening."

"His mamma?" Volney thought he was strangling then. "What do you mean?" he demanded, hoarsely.

A faint glimmer of the truth dawned upon the footman.

"You have been absent from England, perhaps, sir," he said, "and do not know that Mr. Talbot Dane is no longer lord. There was another heir, who married, and left a son, the present lord. It was Mr. Talbot Dane, perhaps, that you wished to see?"

"Let me see that child!"

Volney's voice sounded like another man's to himself, so strained and unnatural.

The footman looked at him, wondering if he were crazy.

"His lordship has retired, I am sure," he said, retreating a step or two, involuntarily, before those terribly eager eyes which his strange questioner fastened upon him.

At this moment a child's laugh rang out, sweet and clear, from some upper region, as a door was opened and shut.

Volney started as though a knife had pierced him. "I must see that child," he repeated, slowly. "Go and bring him here, or take me to him on a moment!"

"It is impossible, sir," began the footman, retreating. "I do not know you, sir. To-morrow—"

The child's laugh sounded again, nearer this time, accompanied by a rush of little feet, and followed by the persuasive accents of a woman's voice.

Volney's blazing eyes flashed in the direction of those sounds. Before the dazed footman could possibly hinder him, or even guess his intention, he had hurled himself past him, as it were, and was leaping up the stairs beyond.

The man sprang after him, in a terrible fright, and then others, who had been lounging there and listening to the stranger, followed.

They were not quick enough, however.

By the time they reached the landing above Volney had come up with the child, and stood gazing at him with eyes whose expression arrested every step but the boy's.

The little three-year-old viscount was a remarkably handsome and interesting child. Tall for his age, and wearing a boy's suit of rich velvet, with a falling collar and wristlets of costly lace, he looked like a little prince. Far from seeming frightened at the abruptness and strange looks of the new comer, he walked boldly up to him, and returned his glance as fearlessly as the young earl might the parent bird's.

It was the child who spoke first.

"I don't know what your name is," he said, with the simple naïveté peculiar to childhood.

A strange quiver crossed Volney's white lips, but he did not utter a sound.

"Come away, my lord, come," his alarmed nurse managed to say at this moment; "come with me, as your mamma will be very much displeased."

"I will come in a moment, Nora," the boy answered, with dignity; "mamma would let me stay if she knew how sorry this gentleman is. She likes me to be kind to sorry people. Do you know what my name is, sir?" he went on to that man whose dead silence appalled every one but him. "I am Lord Dane, but my mamma calls me Volney. I'm my mamma's treasure, and my papa don't know he's got me."

Almost as the words left the child's innocent lips Volney started, staggering towards him with a cry that rang through the great house. He fell before he had taken two steps—fell as a man falls when he is dead.

The servants gathered round him as he lay. The Countess Sybil's own maid came running at the uproar, and began to cry as soon as she saw him lying there so white and still.

"It is my lady's dear husband! Oh, thank Heaven, it is!" she cried out. "Go for her, some of you, and get a surgeon too. He mustn't die now."

The doctor came before Sybil did.

They had carried the unconscious man into his wife's own chamber by that time.

"It is only a swoon," the doctor said; "he will be all right again presently."

They were all standing round him when he came to himself at last, all watching his return to life and sense with loving eyes—his wife, his sister, Baron Chandos, and Talbot Dane, and—little Volney.

Sybil's arm was round his neck, and the child was on the other side.

It was almost too much happiness to descend at once on one heart that had so long been a stranger to joy. But by degrees Volney, Lord Dane, was made to understand and realize it all.

He took his rightful position in life at last, the position that would have come to him naturally long before but for that deceit for which he had so bitterly atoned. He lived a chastened, a repentant, and a better man.

Talbot Dane rose rapidly in his profession, and never gave his wife, the Lady Perdita, reason to regret forgiving him for what he never could quite forgive himself.

Perdita kept her promise to the dead Cheeny concerning his child. The knowledge she had promised should be concealed from Georgie was kept from him. He was always to her as an elder son, beloved, and loving in return with a rare affection.

#### THE END.

SHARP shocks of earthquake were felt on the 18th of October in many districts of Australia. No damage, however, was done.

THE ORIGIN OF MAN.—Dr. Ludwig Buechner, the German naturalist, lately delivered a lecture on the Origin of Man in connection with the theory of the origin and development of life. After explaining the Darwinian theory of the origin of life the lecturer characterized the hypothesis that man is a descendant of the monkey and the ape as absurd. The higher classes of monkeydom—the gorilla, the chimpanzee, and orang-outang—were, he said, only our cousins, and there was some satisfaction that these

ugly animals were not our ancestors. But there was no doubt that they descended from the same ancestor who was the forefather of man. The origin of man must be looked for in a tropical region, probably Southern Asia or Africa, during the tertiary period. There is a theory that between Southern Asia and Africa there existed a now sunken continent, called *Lamuria*, of which there are traces in the numerous islands where, according to some authors, the origin of man was placed. The ancestor of man was described as a hairy, long-headed animal, with long arms and short legs, which, by the development of the brain and its moral attributes, resulted in the development of man. If the origin of man is placed in the tertiary period, the time of the origin of man must be traced back hundreds of thousands of years.

## THE FORTUNES OF BRAMBLETHORPE.

### CHAPTER IX.

THE carriage stopped in front of the church, and the three descended and entered. There was no one inside the great shadowy building excepting the minister and the clerk. James beckoned the minister out into the aisle.

"She's like a tricky mare," he whispered, in a loud, hoarse whisper; "she's backing out at this hour. Did you ever hear the like of that? Talk to her, my good mon, and convince her of her duty to me."

"What's the matter, child?" asked the severe-looking Scotch divine, looking rebukingly at the young beauty.

"I do not love him, sir. You can see with your own eyes that we are not well matched."

The minister gravely ran his glance over the restless, plain-featured, brawny-shouldered, poorly dressed MacLeod, and then over the exquisite creature who stood by his side.

"You should stand by your word," he said, shaking his head.

"Ay, an' given to her dying father at that," burst forth MacLeod.

"That is just it," said Agnes. "My dear father, thinking it all for my welfare, promised me to my cousin, and I consented because my father asked me, and I was too young to realize all that the promise included."

"She would have been aye weel content if a wicked young puppy of the nobility had not turned her head. If I had nae waited on her pleasure so long she would a been mine now and this nonsense ended. I tell you, sir, we must be married at once!" said James, beginning to lose his anger in his uneasiness.

"He is not wicked, sir," said Agnes, sweetly. "However, I do not expect to marry any one. Sir," she added, earnestly, "do you truly think my father, if he knew, would wish me to keep my promise? And do not you think it wrong to marry without love?"

"Not always, my daughter," said the formal divine; "where there are respect and gratitude and the expressed wishes of those who know better than yourself what is good for you. You should be prudent, child, and take the advice of your elders."

"But if I love another man with all my heart and soul!" added the young lady, her dark-blue eyes smiling through their tears into his with an expression which disturbed the good gentleman.

"In such a case," he began, slowly, "it might—be wrong—and then again circumstances—"

"There, there, you have said the word," cried Agnes, almost gaily. "I do not love my cousin and I do love another man. There will be no wedding to-day; but you shall not lose your fee, dear sir, and she pushed three or four gold pieces into the minister's hand. "Come, Mary, we are going to the train."

"Where's the police? I'll stop her by force," stormed MacLeod.

"Nay, I see plainly thou wilt have to resign thy desire for the present," said the divine. "The maiden cannot be forced to marry thee. My advice is to humour her for the present, and some day you may win your wife yet. She'll be as much as you can manage," he murmured, looking after the brilliant girl, who had never before in all her life appeared so sparkling, so wilful, so full of fire and purpose and almost daring animation.

She had broken her chain at last, and was exulting in her first sense of freedom.

Pale and trembling the laird emerged from the chilly church.

The women were already in the coach.

He was about to stalk off without a parting glance, when Agnes called timidly after him:

"You may as well ride to the station in the same coach, cousin."

"I inferred you would be driving back to your

aunt's," he responded, sulkily, coming back to them. "It's small pleasure the sight o' her would give me now."

"I shall not go back to aunt's at present," said Agnes. "I am going to my own dear Scottish home, and Mary here will take care of me, as she has always done."

In spite of his cruel, bitter disappointment, a faint gleam broke over his gloomy countenance at this news.

It would have been adding poison to his cup of wormwood to feel that Agnes had gone back to her lover and her aunt.

"While there is life there is hope," and while Agnes remained unmarried and secure in her own mountain home James felt that she was not entirely lost to him.

He climbed in beside her, and they were driven to the station.

"Not man and wife, thank Heaven," said the girl, under her breath.

Now that she had gained her point, Agnes, woman-like, began to be friendly, and to endeavour through the journey to apply a little balm to the wound she had inflicted.

It was a feeling of shrinking delicacy which had decided her to return to her own home instead of going back to her aunt. She felt that if she returned to Mrs. MacLeod's it would be like saying to Lord Harry:

"Here I am. Come and take me."

This delicacy was exaggerated beyond reason, but she was a timid and inexperienced girl, likely to discourage a lover by excessive shyness. She intended shortly after reaching home to write to her aunt, saying that she was not married and had decided that she never could or would fulfil her engagement with her cousin. She knew very well that Mrs. MacLeod would not be tardy in conveying the news to Lord Harry, and that he would be able to put the right construction upon it.

Then if he were indeed the lover he had declared himself it would not be long before he sought her out and renewed his suit.

She certainly did not sufficiently consider the anguish which, in the meantime, Lord Harry must endure, believing her the wife of another. She was too modest in her estimate of her own power to believe that it might have a serious effect on his health and character, or to anticipate the rash action into which his despair might hurry him.

In punishment for this disregard of her lover's interests she waited many a long and weary summer day in the vain expectation of hearing from or seeing him.

"I would like to go over to the Continent for a few weeks, father," said Lord Harry at the dinner table the evening of the morning on which he had passed the shabby bridal cortege of MacLeod of Melrose.

"You must have taken a sudden resolution," remarked the earl, looking rather anxiously at his son, whose bloodless face and weary air excited real alarm.

"I had not thought of it until to-day. But I am not well. I feel out of health and spirits both. I need a change."

Estelle was watching him with those keen gray eyes of hers.

"She has jilted him," she reflected.

"Can he have been disappointed after all?" she thought. "The young lady must be hard to please who could refuse Harry."

Clara cried out on her brother for his selfishness in deserting them just when they needed him so much for an escort.

"Papa can't go half the time, and we shall be bealess."

"Yes, you really ought to consider that!" echoed Mrs. Captain De Vere Bramblethorpe, piteously.

"I can consider no one but myself," answered the young gentleman, in a hard, cold tone, very unnatural to him, who was generally willing to sacrifice himself good-naturedly to the wishes of others. "You can solace yourselves with the fact that I would be of little service to you if I remained here."

"Are you really ill, dear Harry?" asked Clara, dropping her pretty petulant manner, and stealing her hand into his—she sat next him at table.

"Heartick, darling," he whispered.

She looked up into his dejected face with both curiosity and compassion, kissed his hand, and fell into a wondering silence.

"You will return in time for the wedding?" asked the earl.

"Yes, father," not but that Lord Harry would have been glad of an excuse to remain away, but he would not slight "the propeties" nor injure his father's feelings to gratify his own wishes.

"The captain will arrive from the East Indies in time for the grand affair I hope," remarked Mrs.

Captain. "He should be here in about four weeks, and the wedding will not come off for about seven."

Estelle gave the lady an eager glance. This absent captain, whom she did not remember ever to have seen, always excited in her a lively interest, perhaps because she had often pondered—while her revenge lay that way—upon him as the instrument to be used in the open avowal of the earl's secret.

Now that she was to marry the earl it became her object to assist in keeping this secret, most especially from this not too fastidious captain; so that, in any case, she could hardly hear his name without awakening a certain train of thought of which others could not dream.

She hardly knew whether to be glad or sorry that Lord Harry was going away. She was glad, because she believed that he had been disappointed in his suit, and she loved him so fiercely and so madly that she preferred his unhappiness to the knowledge that he was the joyous lover of another woman. At the same time a remorseful thrill ran through her to think that perhaps—had she not too impatiently betrayed her true self to him, and compromised herself with his father—perhaps she might have won him after all. With Agnes MacLeod the wife of another man her own chances would not have been hopeless. It was too late to repent, and she smiled brightly into the earl's face as he spoke to her, the incarnation of sparkling contentment.

While the rest of the family were off to a brilliant private concert, given for some charitable purpose, which she had taken it into her handsome head to patronize, Lord Harry was in his room writing a few letters and superintending the packing of his luggage.

The next morning he started for the Continent without other company than the attendance of his servant.

A day or two later the young ladies met Mrs. MacLeod at a ball.

"An' where is that canny brother, my dears?"

"We do not know just where he is, Mrs. MacLeod; he started for the Continent last Thursday."

"He!" said the Scotch lady, in her loud way, then added to Lady Augusta, under her breath. "There's two hearts broken a' for a silly caprice about dooty. I suppose he told ye my niece was married to James MacLeod?"

"I feared that was the reason of his low spirits; but I did not question him. I'm so sorry for my dear brother."

"Ye ken now how obstinate she was in spite o' her gentle looks. I dinna ken where in the world she got that perverse streak," she said, musingly. "It's nae in the bluid—I'm sure o' that, though my nephew, James, is like a mule if you try to drive him."

Lady Augusta could not but smile; she had heard that the MacLeods, as a race, did no discredit to their native hills in the matter of wilfulness.

"You're laughing at me, lassie, and, there, I dare say I deserve it. We're none of us unco good tempered. An' to think of my niece, Agnes, throwing herself awa' in that manner! It's a crying shame! I doubt she bitterly repents."

"She was very beautiful, and looked sweet and good," mused Lady Augusta. "All we can hope now is that my brother will soon forget her."

Still, a few days later, Mrs. MacLeod received a letter in the well-known handwriting of her niece.

She allowed it to lie unopened on her table for several hours; her indignation was still burning, and she declared to herself that it was a piece of impertinence for Mrs. Agnes to write to her.

As the day passed curiosity, if not affection, got the better of her wrath; and she took up the letter, slowly cutting the end of the envelope, and drawing out the closely written sheet.

As she ran her eyes down the first page she uttered a cry of astonishment—then more eagerly went on with the perusal.

At its close the missive dropped into her lap.

"It passes common sense—sic behaviour!"

Still, she appeared to feel more relieved than angry. Her reflections ended in her springing up and ordering her carriage, into which she descended as soon as it appeared, and was driven to the Earl of Bramblethorpe's.

The ladies were at home; she inquired only for the Lady Augusta, who was dressing for dinner, but who came down presently.

"I just wanted to see you for one moment, my dear, to ask you if you will write immediately to your brother and inform him that Agnes is not married at all. She backed out at the very kirk door, my love. Did you ever know the like o' that? and she writes me that she will never wed wi' James if the heavens fall. I dinna ken what's changed her mind so completely, but I thought it might be pleasant news for Lord Harry, so I posted over here without delay, and now I'm going back as directly as I came. Will you write at once and inform him from me?"



"I will, indeed, with pleasure."

"Well, then, farewell, my dear. I trust it will bring the lad back as quickly as it sent him off."

And all in a business she had arrived, the lady took herself away.

Augusta did write that evening, directing her letter to Geneva, from which city she had last heard from Lord Harry; but he was gone from there before the message arrived, and it chanced that it never reached him at all.

It chanced, also, that Estelle did not hear the story of Agnes's marriage contradicted; so that she rested in peace in the belief that Lord Harry would probably subside into an old bachelor.

Her preparations for the wedding were on as grand a scale as her father's limited means permitted. She had written to him to be as liberal with her as he dared be; and the studious, dreaming, unworldly rector, dazzled by the unexpectedness of his child's betrothal to a man fully as old or older than himself, but feeling helplessly that it was none of his business, called his curate to him and sent him up to London, empowered to draw from the Bank of England such moneys as he had there, and to deliver them into his daughter's hand for the purchase of wedding equipments.

"Whom is Miss Estelle to marry?" gasped Mr. Jordan, when he had received these orders. "I suppose I know—Lord Harry?"

"What's the matter, Jordan? You look faint. Are you ill?"

"No—only one of my sick-headaches. You did not tell me, sir."

"Tell you? Ah, yes! whom is Estelle to marry? You never can guess, William, if you try for a month!"

"Then it's not Lord Harry?"

"Bless you! Why, it's—it's Lord Harry's father!" he answered, jerking out the words as if they came rather unwillingly. "A great match, William! A splendid match! My little Estelle will be a countess! I suppose I ought to be gratified, and yet I do not like it! It seems rather unnatural to me. Does it not strike you in that light, Mr. Jordan?"

"Not at all," answered the curate, with white lips. "Nothing could be more natural. The earl desires a gay, handsome young wife, and Miss Estelle desires wealth and position. Nothing could be more natural."

The rector regarded him with an uncomprehending, wild stare.

"At least it has surprised me," he said. "But it's too late to give my advice now. I am sure I hope my girl will be happy. I shall have to go up to the wedding, but I do not care to go low; and as you were speaking of a holiday visit to London, Mr. Jordan, why not make it now, and draw out the money for which Estelle asks me, and deliver it into her own hands? There is something over two thousand pounds to my credit. I suppose the little minx will want it all. She always was extravagant."

"She will have some one to settle her little bills after this. I will go if you think best, Mr. Styles."

"It will save me the worry of a journey. Give her my love, and tell her I will come up a few days before the day, and perform the ceremony if they wish it. My little girl about to marry the earl! It will take me some time to become accustomed to this sudden change in our family affairs."

"People usually reconcile themselves to prosperity, sir. Your daughter will be a countess."

"Ay, ay, that's something. If the child really likes him it will be all right. The earl is a good man, and pleasant we know."

The curate turned away.

It seemed that his head ached intolerably, he was so abrupt and looked so ill.

"You had better have a cup of tea and go to bed directly," said the rector, kindly. "You will need a good night's rest to cure that headache, and you will have ample time for your few preparations before the express passes through to-morrow."

"Thank you," murmured the curate, stumbling out of the library as if half blind with pain—as he was. But he did not go to bed nor to his room.

He crept down the garden, out beyond the rear gate, and away over the fields, through the dim, lonesome glimmer of the lingering summer twilight.

Now rapidly, now slowly he wandered forward, until, all unconscious of the vague memories which had directed his steps, he found himself in the lovely grounds which surrounded Bramblethorpe Villa.

He was in the flower garden. The silver falling of a fountain drew him on, until, in the falling light, he stood by its brim, bathing his hot forehead in its cool spray.

The air was warm and sweet to faintness with the odours rising from the flowers.

Mr. Jordan leant on the rim of the marble basin, pondering the luxury and the beauty of the place—her home that was to be.

The humble curate, forced all his life to chain his

desires within the meagre bounds of a hundred pounds a year, felt the beauty and the glory of the place to the full, with as exquisite an appreciation as any of the proud creatures who had inherited, through generations, the right to such refined pleasure.

It was no pleasure to him now, although he had never felt the charm more keenly; it was misery, it was almost madness! He bethought him of the little lake, lying betwixt green hillocks at the back of the flower garden. His brain was so over-tired, so heated, it seemed that it might be sweet to lie at its cool, pebbly bottom, and let the ripples wash above his motionless face.

He turned and made his way through paths lined with dewy sweetness, to where the dark water ran on in silver ripples, just kissed by the faint moonlight. He found a bench very close to the lake and sat down on it.

It was there that he had first been led on by Estelle to betray his love—cruelly led on by a wilful coquette, who had played with him because, at that time, there was no higher game within reach.

It was only the firmness of his religious principles which enabled the half-desperate man to struggle successfully with temptation to suicide. Life appeared intolerable, and the cold repose at the bottom of that sighing water very sweet. To escape the fascination of its murmur, which whispered to him to come, he looked up to the clear, blue heaven, now thick with stars.

"Since I may not live for my only happiness," he prayed, "oh, Heaven, let me live for the welfare of others—the poor, the miserable, to whom I am most truly a brother!"

This was the character of the man who could yet cast the wealth of his love at the feet of a woman like Estelle, of the earth so earthy.

It was after midnight when Mr. Jordan stole into his room; but he was up early, and the dreaming rector did not remark the signs in his face of the struggle through which he had passed.

Late that afternoon, as Estelle came down the staircase of her London home, dressed beautifully, and quite conscious of her charms, a song on her lips, bright colour in her cheek, she was a little discomposed to encounter at the foot her country-curate lover. He was waiting there for his card to be taken in.

"Mr. Jordan!" she exclaimed, blushing scarlet—then, as cool, bright and gay as ever, she seized his hand, saying, warmly:

"How is dear papa? Is he not coming? And how are you? The family will be so glad to see you. Are you well?"

"Thank you, quite well. Your father sent me on some business—"

"Oh, did he? Come into the drawing-room, and you can tell me about it."

She drew him along with her soft, warm hands, seating him in an easy-chair.

If he had not known her so well, he could have sworn that she was glad to see him.

"He commissioned me to obtain some funds from the bank, to be expended on your wedding-gear, I believe."

He held out the roll of bank-notes, and as she took them from him her eyes sparkled with something very like avarice.

"How much is there?" she eagerly asked.

"All that your father has saved these many years—two thousand pounds."

"Dear, generous papa! But then you know, Mr. Jordan, the money could never be put to better use. I daresay papa saved it for me, and I shall never want it so much as I do now. I must have a suitable outfit, and I should be mortified to accept my very wardrobe from the earl. Tell papa how much I thank him. You are not going to-night, Mr. Jordan?" she added as he rose from his chair.

"Yes—to my room at the hotel."

He was about to leave without another word, but he was prevented by the entrance of the earl, who had come in an hour before dinner for a little *à-là-tête* with his fiancée.

Unconscious of the relations between his soon-to-be-wife and the young curate, the earl was all hospitality; he would not hear of the guest being entertained anywhere but at his own house, making it impossible for Mr. Jordan to escape at least remaining to dine.

The two daughters of the house soon came in and joined in the welcome.

"I wish we could have another good game of croquet, like that last one at the villa," said Clara. "How is my partner, Sir Howard Bolling—flourishing, Mr. Jordan? How are the flowers in the dear sweet, old garden? Have you been over there since we came away?"

"I was there last night," answered the visitor, his eyes straying to Estelle's, which happened just then to meet his burning glance. "I wandered about for

hours. The flowers were in their glory, Lady Clara. Everything was heavenly sweet. It reminded me of a night two summers ago—but what am I speaking of? Yes, the garden was never more enchanting than last night. I went there and sat alone by the little lake. I remained there until after midnight."

He was talking really to Estelle, whose colour changed, but whose eyes seemed fascinated by his own. His voice was dreamy and low.

Clara listened to him, eager to hear about the places she loved, yet struck by the singularity of his tone and manner.

"I wish I had been with you, Mr. Jordan," she remarked.

They chatted of many trifles; they sat through a formal dinner, and when it was over Estelle ran up to her room to put her money in a safe place.

"Why did not papa come himself?" she muttered, impatiently. "What possessed him to send that idiot here to sit and stare at me with his big eyes? I should have thought Mr. Jordan would have considered that it would not be agreeable to me to see him just now. Well, if he can endure it I can!"

And down she flew as radiant as a bird, and nestled herself by the earl's side.

When the evening was over and Mr. Jordan had gone away to his hotel, his most powerful impression was that the Earl of Bramblethorpe was looking very bad.

He had seldom seen a person change so greatly in a fortnight's time.

Yet the earl declared himself much better than when he left the villa, and seemed very happy with his young bride-elect by his side.

Certainly the family had taken no note of the change in his appearance; and indeed it was of an indescribable and insidious kind.

He looked like one who was going to be ill.

Mr. Jordan thought of it a good deal, and when he returned to Bramblethorpe he mentioned it to the rector, who wrote immediately to inquire, and was cheerfully answered by his daughter that the earl had never in his life been better—except that occasionally he was troubled by a few moments' rush of blood to the head—nothing at all serious—the summer heat!

The preparations for the marriage went busily forward.

A rumour of the coming event had thrilled through society. It began to be the favourite theme of ladies during their morning calls.

Some, who had wanted the earl for themselves or their daughters, were vexed, and said spiteful things; his friends generally were surprised, not having regarded him as a marrying man, and because he had chosen a poor girl.

Estelle knew that very sharp comments would be made on the match.

She rather exulted at the idea—her triumph was all the sweeter; and, whatever people might say, once she became Countess of Bramblethorpe they would all pay court to her.

She intended to become a leader in fashionable circles. Her ambition was unbounded. Meantime her *trousseau* must be of great magnificence, and she must have a long train of bridesmaids.

The two thousand pounds did not hold out, and so she had recourse to bills.

As we have before mentioned she had quite a fine supply of jewels left her by her mother. To these were added the costly and beautiful gifts which her fiancé constantly made her, and the presents of the relatives.

She would stand in a trance of pleasure looking at these treasures, which almost repaid her for the sacrifice of her youth.

Once, indeed, she tasted of the bitter cup of which she had given the curate to drink. That was when Lord Harry returned from his wanderings to attend the wedding to take place a few days later. Pride and duty both prompted the young man to return at this time, as his absence would have been commented upon.

When he came home, thin and sunburned, but with a sort of reckless grace of manner which made him more fascinating than ever, Estelle, whose hollow and selfish heart had never been mastered by any but he, had to fight the battle with this passion all over again. She loved him, and she hated him because he did not love her. It softened the pangs of her wounded pride to think in how many ways as his father's wife she could torment him. As for him, he was absolutely indifferent to her. He, also, like Mr. Jordan, at once remarked something strangely altered in the earl's appearance.

"Are you well, father?" was the repeated inquiry.

"Very well, indeed, except a curious lassitude which steals over me at times—the effect of the unusually warm weather. My appetite is good; my spirits capital. It is you, my son, who are the ailing one. Better try my prescription—get married."

"Never, father! I have done with love affairs." The old man smiled at the young one.

"Tell me that ten years from now," he said.

The few remaining days before the grand wedding fled on. Despite the seven weeks she had taken, Estelle was hurried to the last moments. Shopping, and dress-makers, with consultations with her galaxy of fair attendants, absorbed so much of her time that she could scarcely afford her fond lover as much of her society as he wished for. The earl was becoming very tender with her; he was almost childish; he scarcely wanted her out of his sight; his fondness wearied her. As she did not love him she had not the quick eye of affection to detect that all was not right with him. He lingered about the house, sending for her to come down and sit with him or sing to him when it was so very inconvenient that she could hardly keep up the pretence of amiability.

It appeared to her almost as if she were a servant to him.

"Never mind!" she whispered to herself, bravely; "the reward is great. I must sacrifice myself a little now; I shall have things all my own way soon. I do believe the earl is growing a little infirm, handsome and well-preserved as he looks. If he anticipates that I shall be always hanging over him, playing nurse and goodwife, he may be disappointed. I shall strictly uphold my position as his wife, but I shall require the most of my time for the claims of society. I mean to have more than one admirer. Lord Harry shall see the woman he slighted madly coveted by other men."

Thus she was laying out the programme of a married coquette. Not that she expected to carry her flirtations beyond the bounds of a countess's dignity, but she had the ambition of a talented and unscrupulous woman to shine in society.

The weather was hot, and the atmosphere full of languor.

When the earl came in, the evening proceeding the bridal day, he complained of a slight headache, lying on the sofa in the library, and declaring himself half-cured by the mere touch of Estelle's handkerchief, wet with eau de cologne, and bound about his temples.

"You must be well, quite well to-morrow," she whispered, pressing his hand to her lips.

She and the bridesmaids had been trying on their dresses, which were more than satisfactory; they fitted exquisitely, and were of new designs. The morrow promised to be bright; not one of the arrangements had failed, and Estelle could afford to be obliging.

The earl fell asleep, magnetized by her light touch.

"How gray and old he looks asleep," was her secret reflection—not a very warm one for a bride-expectant.

She looked up, after watching him for a few moments, to encounter the eyes of Lord Harry, who had come softly up to ask how his father was getting along.

"He sleeps," she whispered, embarrassed.

"He looks ill. I do not feel easy about him, Estelle."

"Do you think so?"

She looked again at the sleeper.

He did seem wan and pale, and there was a sunken circle about his eyes, and yet he did not appear so ill as he did unnatural.

"I do hope he will be better in the morning!"

The trembling emphasis of this wish might have sounded like the heartfelt interest of a loving bride; but it was only the echo of a vague terror lost, even yet, some accident might delay the marriage, and the glittering bauble after which she grasped might slip from her hand.

(To be continued.)

## RED HELM.

### CHAPTER III.

On horror's head horrors accumulate.

Things out of hope are compass'd off with venturing. *Shakespeare.*

As Fay spoke she drew Brenton to one side, beneath the shelter of a rock, half covered with moss and creeping vines.

Not many minutes were they there when the heavy steps of Bolak were heard crashing through the underwood, while behind him followed the lion, Brava.

"The Malay was of gigantic stature, about six feet five, with long black hair hanging in straight masses over his broad shoulders, and a low forehead, from beneath which gleamed eyes of savage fierceness.

He was attired in white canvas pants, confined about the waist with a belt, in which were thrust a pistol and a long knife with a crooked handle.

"He still!" whispered Faith, as Brenton half rose

to obtain a better view of the Malay and his companion; "he has quick ears and may hear you!"

Brave, the lion, was about five feet long, having a head larger even than usual for an animal of his kind.

His eyes, set deep in his forehead, gleamed like blazing coals, and as he moved on he would now and then tear up the leaves with his forepaws, and utter a low growl.

When the two were out of sight Brenton turned to his companion.

"Is that man a pirate?"

"Yes, he is the chief of a large party of the islanders here, and he has committed many terrible crimes."

"That lion seemed to follow him obediently enough. Did he tame it himself?"

"Yes. He's a great fighter. He hunted and captured the lion in another country. Then he tamed it so that it will now obey him like a dog."

"And help him in his combats, I suppose."

"Yes. It is as ferocious as it ever was with strangers. Bolak has taught it to hate white men. But come, we must move on, or we may yet be discovered."

They left the spot and Faith continued to conduct Brenton through the depths of the forest.

In some places the brushwood hung so thickly about the narrow paths, that the young sailor could never have found his way through the tangled masses alone to any given point.

He was impressed by the beauty of this forest.

The tress laden with red, green and yellow leaves were in some places covered with blossoms which emitted a delicious fragrance, while on all sides the warbling of birds was heard.

These, of course, as variegated as the leaves, fluttered in and out among the branches by hundreds.

"This is a beautiful island!" said Brenton.

"Yes. If the natives were better people it would be a Paradise," answered the girl, sighing.

"It is strange that they have never offered to harm you."

"They dare not, for, as I have told you, my adopted mother is one of their own kind."

"And is she like the rest or better?"

"I am sorry to say she is not much better. She would not commit bloodshed herself, yet she is willing that her people should do so, and would not interfere. Alas! that is how your unfortunate shipmates—"

She paused, turning deadly pale.

"Go on," said Brenton.

"I dare not. Wait until you have rested and are stronger. In your present state the news would pain you and make you feel worse even than you do."

"No. I should like to hear what you have to tell me."

"Well then," said Faith, "they have all perished."

"Perished?"

"Yes."

She told him how the vessel had been attacked by the Malays, the crew slaughtered, and the craft afterward burned.

"Although they must either have been piloted into the island bay or have gone to pieces on the rocks, yet I am sorry I had a hand in getting their vessel into this unfortunate place."

She then related how she had piloted the craft to her anchorage.

"The pirates," she went on, "had sailed away the day previous for another island, where they were to have remained absent for a couple of weeks, wherefore I did not suppose there was any danger, as the ship would sail, I thought, before they could get back. It seems, however, that they injured a part of their vessel, and therefore put back, reaching the island a few hours before the arrival of your ship. Had I known of their arrival, which I did not, I could have warned the captain. That night I heard of it from my mother and also of the plan to attack the white men's ship. I ran to my canoe to put off and endeavour to intercede for them, but I was overtaken by my mother, who is very strong, and she would not permit me to go."

Tears came to the speaker's eyes, and she seemed much agitated.

"I am so sorry I could not go," she added, "as I have great influence, and might at least have saved part of the crew."

Brenton was deeply affected at hearing this news.

"Why," he finally asked, with some surprise, "will you live with such a creature as that woman? Why not leave the island, and go to some civilized land?"

"I cannot," she answered; "there is a reason, which I may explain to you some other time."

Brenton was silent. The knowledge that his shipmates, whom he had believed were lost at sea, had been murdered weighed heavily on his spirits.

Faith led him on, until they gained a rock, deep down in a small valley. She led him through a passage in the rock to the other side, where there was an old ruin, evidently that of some temple of former times.

"There," she said, pulling away some long grass and weeds and disclosing a flat stone, "this retreat is known only to me. I discovered it one day while wandering in the woods."

She raised the stone, disclosing a flight of steps leading down in the ground.

These she descended, followed by her companion, until they gained a sort of rocky vestibule, at one end of which he thought he could detect a gleam of light.

Feeling a puff of cool air upon his face from this opening, he advanced to it, and looked through to discover that it was on the edge of a deep, narrow ravine or pit, hidden above by crooked trees bending over and masses of vines interlaced.

"The place has not yet been discovered by the Malays, and never will be, I hope."

Brenton shuddered as he looked down into the dark depths of the ravine, which seemed unfathomable.

"There," continued Faith, pointing toward a corner of the cell, where some dried leaves gathered might serve for a couch, "you can lie and rest until I come back bringing you food and water."

"Thanks," said Brenton, who had now turned away from the opening; "it is really fortunate I fell in with you."

Faith now took leave of him, when he threw himself down on his couch and was soon fast asleep.

He was awakened by a strange noise—a hoarse croaking that went through the cell like the voice of some goblin.

He rose and looked round him, but, not seeing anything, he judged that he had merely fancied that he heard the sound.

By his side a pitcher of water, with some bread-fruit and oranges, betokened that Faith had visited the cell while he was buried in slumber.

He drank eagerly of the water, then ate of the bread-fruit and the oranges, which refreshed him much.

He had scarcely finished his meal when he again heard the croaking, apparently coming from the direction of the opening.

A strange-looking bird, shaped something like a bat, had flown upon the edge of the opening, and was now hopping hither and thither, spreading and flapping its wings in a frightened manner.

Suddenly there was a sort of crash above, and the bird, with another croak, entered the cell, where it stood trembling like a leaf.

Brenton was not long left in doubt as to the cause of its singular actions.

The head of a huge serpent was thrust through the opening, extending downward toward the bird, its forked tongue darting out spitefully, as, with a strange, hissing noise, it drew its scaly folds into the cell.

Brenton shuddered to behold this appalling spectacle.

The serpent was a long one, apparently not less than twelve feet, as the young man could judge by that part of its body in the cell.

Its eyes, flaming like sparks of fire, were turned steadily upon the bird, which stood as if fascinated—unable to move.

Not long was it there; for with a sudden, spiteful hiss, louder than before, the serpent darted upon it, and in a moment had received the creature in its distended jaws.

Brenton hoped it would be satisfied with this meal, but such was not the case. It now fixed its spiteful gaze upon the young sailor, who, unharmed as he was, was for a moment undecided how he should act.

At length the serpent commenced slowly to draw itself towards him, until the whole of its repulsive body was in the cell, when it coiled itself partially, as if preparing for a spring.

Brenton looked round him, but he could see no way of leaving the retreat, even had his enemy given him time to do so.

What should he do?

The serpent, meanwhile, having prepared itself, emitted a hiss and seemed on the point of springing upon the young man, when a deep roar that shook the walls of the cell was heard outside.

Instantly the head of the monster was turned towards the direction of the noise, its little eyes sparkling brighter even than before, while a low, prolonged hiss escaped it.

Again that roaring noise was heard. Then there was a crash in the shrubbery above, and the terrible face of Brave, the lion, appeared at the opening.

The animal had sprung down from above, and was now clinging with its fore paws to the edge of the



aperture, endeavouring to clamber into the cell, evidently to get at the serpent, which it had scented from afar.

Soon it succeeded in effecting its object, entering through the opening, and crouching, with its eyes fixed upon the serpent, while its tail, angrily lashed, beat against the floor.

Meanwhile it occasionally would give utterance to a roar, which was almost deafening, and which, mingling with the hissing of its enemy, now so loud that it sounded almost like the escape of steam from a pipe, created such a din as had never before greeted Brenton's ears.

For several minutes this was kept up, when, suddenly, whistling through the air like a bomb, the lion pounced upon his enemy, which, giving battle in return, enabled Brenton to witness such a combat as is seldom seen.

The lion had seized the serpent just below the head, in its sharp teeth, but could make use of its fangs the other monster coiled itself round his body, squeezing his throat so tightly that his jaws opened, thus freeing the body of his antagonist.

Round and round the force of the serpent now coiled itself; but the former, now rolling over and with tremendous strength drawing back from the vice-like clasp of those scaly folds in time to escape the crooked head of his angry antagonist, again sprang at him.

The elongated head of the serpent was drawn back; then, like a flash of light, its little eyes went through the air as it darted its forked tongue towards the beast. But the lion was quick enough to avoid the meditated stroke. He sprang to one side, and, seizing the middle part of his enemy's body, commenced tearing it with his claws.

Not long was he permitted to do this; for the serpent's body again encircled him in scaly folds, and now a roar of pain escaped the king of beasts as he was squeezed in the living coil.

With his tremendous strength, however, he contrived to free himself, and, making a third spring at his antagonist, he now seized its head, which he quickly crushed with his fangs.

Such was the agony of the scaly monster while this was being done that its long body writhed about the cell, its tail beating the wall with such force that some small fragments of loose rock in the wall were scattered all about the apartment.

The creature seemed to show signs of life long after it became the lion's victim.

Its body, however, continued moving, writhing and twisting more slowly every moment, until finally it lay perfectly still.

The lion, with a low, triumphant growl, walked round its victim several times; then, glancing up, its gaze fell upon Brenton.

With glaring eyes, its tail lashing the floor of the retreat, it sat watching the young man for a moment when it gave utterance to a deep, half-smothered roar.

Having no weapon with him, our hero sat motionless, unflinchingly meeting the gaze of the beast, and looked him steadily in the eye.

But, whatever may be said of the power of the human eye over the lower animals, Brave was not to be thus daunted.

His orbs gleamed with increasing fierceness, and Brenton soon noticed that the creature was putting himself in a position for a spring.

Though a person of great courage yet the young man could not help shuddering inwardly at the aspect of the ferocious animal, from which, however, he was careful to hide the real state of his feelings by showing a calm exterior.

Gradually, almost imperceptibly, he edged toward the opening looking out upon the deep ravine, his quick mind having formed a plan of escape, which might or might not prove successful.

On gazing through the aperture, previous to his elumber, he had noticed a strong-looking tendril growing close to the rocky wall, to which it seemed firmly attached above.

Now, as the lion was between him and the door of the apartment, thus preventing his exit in that direction, he concluded to get to the opening and to spring suddenly through it, clutching the vine tendril outside, when the lion, he argued, would follow, and, missing him, fall into the ravine.

There was no time to lose.

The beast had already noticed his movements toward the opening, and now, crouching lower, it seemed on the point of springing.

Brenton, quickly stretching out his arms, clutched the edge of the opening, and drew himself up.

Then he heard behind him a short, deep growl, and knew that the lion was about making the leap.

In fact the whiz and rush of its body as it passed through the air was heard a moment later, just as Brenton had time to drop down from the opening, with both hands clutching the vine tendril.

On came the lion, its body cleaving the air like a shot, and passing through the aperture over the young man's head.

One wild, terrible roar greeted his ears; he heard the ferocious beast as it fell crashing into the dark depths beneath him.

Down—down—lower and lower—crash—crash—crack—snap—snap—snap, through outspreading twigs and branches, descended the lion's body—then all was still.

Silently thanking Heaven for his escape, Brenton now endeavoured to draw himself back into the opening.

He heard a snapping sound as he climbed, and, glancing above him, he perceived that the tendril had partially broken a little below the top of the precipice!

This somewhat startled him, but as the opening was only a few feet above him, he trusted that the vine would hold until he could reach it.

Slowly and carefully he drew himself toward it, keeping his gaze upon the spot where the tendril had begun to part.

He was within a foot of the edge of the aperture when he heard another snap, and now perceived that the vine must give way.

What could he do?

Nothing but remain hanging where he was, awaiting the doom which seemed in store for him.

About thirteen inches from him, however, beyond the range of the opening, there was another tendril more slender than the other, but it, nevertheless, might be better capable of bearing his weight.

At any rate he now resolved to endeavour to reach it.

Quickly stretching out a hand, he clutched it, and drew it toward him, then grasped it with both hands, obtaining a hold just as the other tendril gave way.

The one he now held was so slippery that he soon began to slide downward, the tendril gliding through his hands.

Vainly he endeavoured to stop his descent by bracing his feet against the rock, and by other means—down he continued to go, until at last his feet struck against a rocky shelf about twenty feet below the top of the ravine.

Thus he was now enabled to keep his place, although, the shelf being not more than twenty inches wide, he could not hope to do so long.

Hour after hour passed until at length, glancing up, he could see through the shrubbery the gleaming of stars and moon, by which he knew it was night.

Wearily and faint, for his late hardships had told even on his iron frame, he clung to his position all night long.

At dawn, glancing toward the opening, he beheld the beautiful eyes of Faith as with anxious countenance she peered into the ravine.

Brenton shouted to her. She started and uttered a cry of surprise.

"Where are you, sir?" she inquired.

"Here, in the ravine. I have no means of getting out."

"Can you stay where you are until I get a rope?"

"Yes. I think so."

"I will not be long. Mother has some coils in her hut, stolen from the vessel which was robbed the other night. I will go and get one. Are you hurt?"

"No."

"Oh, I am glad of that! Keep up a brave heart, sir."

"Thanks, pretty one. I will try to."

The next moment the beautiful face had vanished from the opening.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### Love.

Will creep in service where it cannot go.

"I must save him! I wonder how he came there," muttered the young girl as she hastened from the cell. "That horrible serpent probably had something to do with it. Unharmful as he was, it was dreadful to be attacked by such a monster!"

As she spoke she shuddered, and directed a glance behind her towards the cell, in which she had seen the creature lying.

She had not proceeded a quarter of a mile when she heard a crashing through the bushes, and in a moment Giant Bolak confronted her.

"Where is he? Have you not seen him?"

"Who?" inquired Fay.

"My lion, Brave. I have not seen him since yesterday afternoon, when he strayed away from me."

Bolak, who had conversed often with the whites, and had once served aboard a sloop-of-war, spoke better English than most of the Malays.

"I have not seen Brave," answered Faith.

"It is dreadful. I must not lose my lion!" cried the giant, his eyes bloodshot, his whole face dark

with passion. "You look pale! You tremble! You know where my Brave is!"

"I know nothing about him," she answered.

He seized her by the arm and drew a dagger.

"Don't deceive me. I have heard something about you. Some of my people chased a white man yesterday. He suddenly vanished. When they rounded the point of land behind which he had been lost sight of the spar to which he had been lashed was there, but the man was gone. You took him away and concealed him, so my people think."

Faith at once became calm.

Her woman's nature, now that she was to "fight," as it were, in the cause of the white stranger, at once gave her strength and courage for the combat.

"Your people are always imagining what is not true," she said, quietly.

Bolak was deceived by her manner. He returned his knife to his belt.

"So you know nothing about him?"

"Nothing."

"I thought perhaps you had hidden him somewhere—that my Brave had found him out and attacked him, and that you had killed the lion to save his life. Had you done this you should not live a minute longer."

Faith reiterated that she knew nothing about the beast, and was moving on when Bolak seized her hand.

"When shall it be?" said he. "Thank you again."

"What?" inquired the young girl, turning pale.

"You know what I mean. When are you to be my wife?"

"Your wife? I have never promised."

"Your mother promised you to me years ago, when you should come of age. It is time now."

"She did mention something of the sort once, and as I believe did you. But when I told you both I could never love you, I thought there was an end of it."

"Pearly be deep," answered the Malay, hoarsely. "I have not spoken of it since, I know, but it was because I thought in time matters would take the right course. Why, girl, do you know it is for this your life has so long been spared by my people?"

"No. I thought it was my adopted mother's influence that so long shielded me here from harm."

"You were mistaken. Come, answer me at once, and tell me you will be Bolak's wife."

His eyes gleamed with an expression half savage, half tender, which was very disagreeable to Faith.

She shuddered, and was about answering him, when, stooping over, he caught her round the waist, and endeavoured to snatch a kiss.

She uttered a cry of disgust, and, supple as a fawn, she broke away from him, bounding off into the woods with asped which soon carried her out of his sight.

The Malay stood gazing toward the spot where she had vanished; then a terrible expression gathered on his face.

"I will try her once more!" he muttered; "then if she refuses me, death—death to the white girl! She shall be buried alive. Bolak prefers doing this to taking an unwilling bride."

Meanwhile Faith kept on, not slackening her speed until she was near the hut of her adopted mother. Her heart was very heavy, for, repugnant as Bolak had always been to her, he had been still more so since she beheld the handsome young sailor whom she had rescued from his enemies.

She had seen white men before near the island, for war vessels sometimes laid off and on its shores, their crews occasionally visiting the place, but these had never touched her heart as Brenton had done.

From the first moment she encountered the gaze of his expressive eyes their magnetism had been felt, and she had experienced an instant sensation of being willing to die in behalf of the stranger, were it necessary.

Her mind was full of him now.

She hoped that her adopted mother had gone out, in which case she could more easily obtain one of the coils of slender rope she had noticed in the hut.

To get back to the cell without being seen by Bolak, who would probably scour the woods all day in search of Brave, might prove a difficult task, and her heart beat so loudly and fast with anxiety and fear on Brenton's account that when she gained the hut she was almost breathless.

She glanced hurriedly around her to perceive that her mother was absent, for which she uttered a faint cry of joy.

To procure one of the coils of rope was the work of a moment.

She threw it across her arm, and hurried on her way toward the cell.

Not far had she walked when ahead of her she beheld Bolak, with another savage, seated gloomy and disconsolate at the foot of a tall tree.



[BRENTON'S PERIL.]

She hastily turned aside to escape observation and took a roundabout way.

Meanwhile Bolak, although he had not looked up when the girl was in sight of him, had heard her footsteps, and had maintained his unconscious position that she might not suspect he knew of her vicinity.

"We must follow her and see where she goes," said Bolak.

The two men rose and hurried swiftly yet cautiously after the young woman. She moved with such speed, however, that she was soon out of their sight in the thick shrubbery.

Bolak clenched his teeth the moment he lost sight of her.

"She goes faster than the wind," he muttered, with mingled vexation and admiration. "None of our people can keep pace with her, although we have some swift runners amongst us."

"So, so," answered his companion; "we never see one move like her."

They quickened their pace, but they now looked in vain for the object of pursuit. In the deep, tangled masses of the woods her form was somewhere hidden, but they could not guess where, as her light step made no noise loud enough in the brush for them to hear.

For a quarter of an hour they vainly continued the search, when suddenly both paused on hearing the voice of a man not far distant, apparently calling to some person.

The voice had a half-smothered sound as if it came from some place down in the very bowels of the earth.

The next moment Bolak's quick ear caught another sound, a sort of growl, which he quickly recognized.

"It is Brave," he exclaimed, joyfully. "And other voice?" inquired his companion. "That not come from Brave?"

"No; it came from a man, a white man too, unless I am much mistaken. Come, the sound was from this direction," he added, proceeding towards the west.

They hurried on, and soon distinguished voices in conversation.

"The rope is fast," came from Faith; "you can climb now."

"Yes, my fair friend, and glad enough I shall be to get out of these dismal quarters."

"Sh!" whispered Bolak to his companion. "Careful! careful! Follow me!"

They got down on hands and knees, and crept in the direction of the voices.

Soon they gained the spot where the entrance to the cell was concealed by shrubbery.

Bolak, pushing this aside, discovered the opening, and peered in to behold Faith, with head thrust through the opening beyond, looking into the ravine.

"Ah!" he hissed through his teeth.

The ejaculation came forth like the noise made by a snake when it sees its prey, and his right hand sought the hilt of his dagger.

"You will soon be up now," said Faith, joyfully, at this moment. "The rope is well fastened to the edge of the rock above; it will not break."

In another minute Brenton stood panting on the edge of the opening.

Faith, having sprung back into the cell to give him room, chancing to turn her head at that moment, discovered Bolak and his companion about entering the apartment.

With ready presence of mind she at once whispered hurriedly to Brenton:

"Keep on—don't enter here! Some of my people have come; you will be discovered. Climb to the top of the ravine and hide yourself in the woods."

"But you, what will become of you?"

"They dare not harm me!" was her quick reply.

"Hasten away—you have not a moment to lose."

Accordingly Brenton climbed to the top of the ravine, which he gained in a minute.

Bolak had, meanwhile, been endeavouring to squeeze his ponderous proportions through the cell opening, which was rather small for one of his size.

At last, however, he succeeded in doing so, when he rushed upon the young girl.

"Traitor!" he exclaimed, "you are discovered."

"I care not," answered Faith, looking with the utmost calmness at the dagger, which he now held threateningly above her.

"Then you die!—die, unless at once you promise to be Bolak's wife."

"I will never promise that," she answered; "as I have told you before, I cannot love you."

The giant sheathed his dagger.

"Death with dagger too good for you," said he; "you shall be buried in the ground alive."

"I would suffer any death," answered she, "rather than be the bride of savage Bolak."

"We shall see," he answered. "Here, take charge of her," he added to his companion, "while I go and look for the white man."

With that he rushed toward the entrance; but even as he did so he heard that deep growl which had before greeted his ears.

"No," he said, turning. "The white man can-

not go far. We will soon hunt him down, and Brave shall help me. I will rescue Brave first."

So saying he walked to the window opening overlooking the ravine and peered down.

As his eyes became accustomed to the gloom he could detect the gleam of a pair of orbs far down, resembling minute points of fire at so great a distance.

"It is he—it is my Brave. Speak, girl; how came he there?" inquired the Malay, turning to Faith.

"I do not know," she answered, for Brenton had not had time to relate all the circumstances regarding his fall into the ravine.

"He is there, and I must get him out. Brave! Brave!" he continued, shouting the name down the ravine with all his might.

A low growl was the response, followed by a deep roar.

Bolak, seizing the rope, descended into the ravine. He had proceeded some distance ere his feet came in contact with a platform far below the one upon which Brenton had found support.

Here the giant paused to behold, a foot beneath him, the outlines of the lion's form, caught in some strong tendril, which alone had saved him from falling into the bottom of the ravine.

Bolak, bending down, soon succeeded, with his tremendous strength, in helping Brave to the rock platform.

The beast, crouching at his side, uttered a sort of growling whine, thus showing his affection for his master.

"Above there!" shouted Bolak.

"Well, what want?" came from the other Malay.

"I have found him—I have found my Brave. Stand by to haul!"

"All right!" came down from above.

The giant then secured the lower part of the rope about the body of his favourite.

After which he mounted the rope, hand over hand, with a dexterity which proved his familiarity with climbing.

The moment he gained the cell he ordered his companion to help him haul on the rope.

Just then, however, he discovered that Faith was missing.

"Where is she?—that girl?" he inquired.

"We don't know. When you call me she slip away before me know it, and go through opening. We could not follow, as you sing out for me from ravine, and me must stay to answer."

"Never mind," said Bolak; "we will find both her and the white man before night."

(To be continued.)





[SHADOWS OF THE HEART.]

## MAURICE DURANT.

## CHAPTER XXV.

Coming events cast their shadows before.

Campbell.

EACH day the excitement grew more intense, the streets were thronged with Yellows, Reds, and Blues playing most awful bands and shouting with terrific discordance. Occasionally there would be a collision and a general scrimmage, which added to the interest and hurt very few if any one.

Chudleigh's party, composed of the *crème de la crème* of the neighbourhood, grew steadily, but Mr. Gregson's grew also, and the roughs, as the Tories called Mr. Gideon Giles's party, did not decrease.

Every evening the "Pig and Whistle" was crammed with dirty-looking men and burly operatives, who listened with upturned, grimy faces to the oratory of their candidate or his backers.

Mr. Gideon Giles on the platform was an opponent not altogether to be despised, as Chudleigh knew, although Sir Fielding treated him and his pretensions to the seat with well-bred scorn.

"They tell me that he speaks remarkably well—at least, with tremendous force," said Chudleigh one day in committee. "I should like to hear him exceedingly."

Mr. Howard laughed.

"Would you?" he said; "so should I. It would be awfully amusing."

"And disgusting," said Sir Fielding, mildly.

"Yes—and disgusting, I daresay," said Lord Cornthwaite.

"I tell you what would be a good idea," exclaimed Mr. Jones. "Get one of his speeches reported, with false 'h's' and notes of ridicule at the end of the sentences, in the *Yellow Banner*. We could copy it and circulate it amongst the Liberals. They're rather taken with the Red principles, but cannot stand ridicule."

"Good," said Chudleigh. "That is if he uses improper 'h's' and says anything ridiculous."

"Oh, does he not?" said Mr. Jones, sarcastically.

"Go and hear him, Mr. Chichester."

"I will," said Chudleigh.

"And I'll go with you," said Mr. Howard.

So it was arranged that the two, muffled up in workmen's jackets, should penetrate the enemy's camp.

Of course there was a good deal of opposition to the resolution, or "cash freak," from some of the committee, but Chudleigh's "I will" unlike Sir Fielding's, could never be turned into "I won't."

"Have you heard that Lantry and young Lord

Goldburn have joined Gregson's committee?" said Mr. Jones.

"Yes," said Sir Fielding. "I am surprised."

"The young ladies have done it," sighed the parliamentary agent. "Women win elections."

The room at the "Pig and Whistle" was crammed as usual when Chudleigh and the Honourable Mr. Howard, clad in workmen's garb, pushed their way into it, and Mr. Gideon Giles was on his feet.

"Fellow workmen," commenced the Republican candidate, hoisting one large red hand above his greasy shock head. "I will not detain you many minutes to-night, and only rise to ask you to keep united in the great struggle that is going on between the noble working man and the bloated aristocrat. Unity is strength, my brothers, and only by standing together shall we crush the head of the snake that has so long ground the working man beneath his heel!! Remember your many wrongs and your rights. Stand out against the first and stick to it for the last. The aristocrats have too long crushed the glorious working man beneath their bloated institutions. We don't want institutions—we want liberty. We don't want a monarch who sucks our blood and deprives our children of bread to support a hindolent man's huffspring on the proceeds of the working man's honest sweat. We don't want a corrupt court and an overweening royalty to spend our money and tax our labour. We don't want an effete government to play fair into the hands of a dissolute aristocracy and false to the interests of the working man. Don't believe in promises, my brethren. Promises ain't a reduction of the taxes, ain't a cheap loaf, ain't protection for the working classes. Promises are only misleading us all on the road leadin' to rooin!"

Here the speaker stopped to wipe the perspiration from his face, which certainly deserved the epithet which he had hurled at the aristocrats so freely, and, tugging at his greasy stock, rolled off again:

"Brethren, as I said before, unity is strength. Go together to the poll—go, taking 'liberty! equality! fraternity!' for your war cry, and establish the holy and noble republic! England is fast rushing down to the habes of ruin! Britons are gradually becoming slaves! Will you be dashed on the rocks of political destruction? Will you be slaves? No, a thousand times no! Cry it with the tongue of the hark-hangel Gabriel—no! no!"

The crowd, catching at the cry, shouted with stentorian lungs, "No! no!" and some one yelling out "Liberty! Fraternity! Equality!" the men gave that too.

Chudleigh was all aflame. A born aristocrat, he could afford to treat the balderdash flung at his order

with smiling contempt; but when the oily-headed ruffian commenced to attack the throne his blood was up, and, looking round at the brawny, honest, simple faces in the dense throng, he felt a strange longing to shout out a plain denial to the rot the idiot had been ranting, and point out to the honest part of the listeners the humbug of the whole speech.

So great became the longing that he found it irresistible, and, whispering to the Honourable Howard to keep quiet, he pushed his way vigorously through the throng, and before any one could prevent him leapt upon the platform.

The hum and buzz of the voices ceased at once, and the faces upturned questioningly, while several voices shouted out:

"Who is it?"

"A friend!" cried Chudleigh, raising his hand to command silence. "A friend too true to stand still and hear his fellow men—his brothers—imposed upon. Gentlemen"—the word told upon them and stilled the murmur of rage that was rising—"gentlemen, I claim your indulgence for one minute. I, with you, have listened to Mr. Gideon Giles's speech, and listened attentively, and I declare his assertions to be false and his politics humbug. He is no friend to the working man who would advise him to exchange good for bad or ill for worse. That is what Mr. Giles wishes you to do. There was a time when the man who dared throw mud at Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen—a good queen, gentlemen, whom I believe all of you in your secret hearts reverence and respect—I say there was a time when a man reviling the queen as Mr. Gideon Giles has done would have had his vile mud thrust down his throat—ay, and by working men too. But things are altered, and for the worst, when working men, honest and true, turn their voices—not their hearts, mind you—against their queen and the state which has cherished, raised, and protected them, at the beck and call of a fellow who by his very speech proves himself neither an honest nor a working man."

Here a thousand yells broke upon the air, poured from the throats of the roughs who composed Mr. Giles's committee and the disreputable portion of the crowd, which, we are sorry to say, were greatly in the majority.

But Chudleigh, not a whit discouraged, raised his hand, and, shouting now, continued:

"You know whether I am speaking the truth or speaking falsely. Look back upon the past history of labour; compare wages, time, and the laws framed for the special benefit of the working man by the very aristocrats you have heard maligned, and tell me if there is one of you who will vote for the man

that declares England a ruin and the working man a slave."

Here the uproar became so intense—what with the yelling and shouting and the cheering and "Go on"—that Chudleigh was compelled to stop, and the next instant a dozen of Mr. Giles's lambs, headed by that gentleman himself, leapt upon the platform.

"Working men! working men!" yelled the republican, "a traitor is in the camp! This is Mr. Chudleigh Chichester, the bloated aristocrats' candidate!"

"Down with him! A traitor! Down with him!" yelled the roughs, and a rush was made upon Chudleigh, who, flinging off his jacket, jumped upon a chair and tried to make himself heard.

Finding it in vain, he next seized the chair in his strong hands, and, looking as if he meant it, declared he would knock the first man down who came within reach.

There was a pause. Another form, Mr. Howard's, placed itself beside Chudleigh. Then came the final rush. Both were knocked to the ground and would have been crushed to death with a Babel of sound ringing in their ears, but at the moment they gave way a tremendous figure burst through the murderous mass, moving its way with the stock end of a heavy gun, and, like a giant, breaking down all before it, cleared a space for the two gasping men, then, crying with a stentorian shout, "Follow me!" forced a passage into the open air, leaving the men knocked about and powerless to avenge from the very rapidity of the feat.

"Mr. Durant," said Chudleigh, wiping the blood from his battered lips as the three leapt into a dogcart waiting in the road, "we owe you our lives!"

#### CHAPTER XXVI.

Tell truth and shame the devil.

Shakespeare.

CHUDLEIGH'S beating went far towards winning him the election, for the higher-class Liberals, led by the ladies, declared that a man who possessed so much bravery and could talk so loyally couldn't do much harm in the House, though a Tory, and gave him their votes, while the respectable working men, unfortunately only few in number, who had been present and witnessed the *mêlée*, deserted the roughs and declared on his side.

Chudleigh, although sadly bruised and cut about the face, was not hurt enough to keep within doors, and the next morning, rising at the usual hour, walked towards his headquarters.

At the end of the lane leading to the Cottage he came full upon Carlotta Lawley, who was just starting for her auto-breakfast walk.

She started and turned pale as she looked up and saw his scarred face, and, stretching out her hand, breathed, rather faintly:

"Mr. Chudleigh!"

"Are you well, Miss Lawley?" he replied, in a grave voice, which he managed to keep steady, although his heart beat madly.

"Yes, quite, thank you. But you—have they hurt you much?"

His heart beat still faster at the anxious tremor in her voice, but he replied, with a careless smile:

"Oh, very little. Their hands are not particularly soft, but they had not time to get at us thoroughly."

"Had not time?" she repeated, her dark eyes fixed upon his face with the hunger and the compassion of love.

"No," he said. "Have you not heard? We should have been dead men for a certainty had it not been for Mr. Durant. He came to the rescue at the right moment and beat a way out for us with his gun like a Samson. He saved our lives without doubt," he added, warmly.

"He is a remarkable man," she murmured, her face grown pale and her bosom heaving at the idea of the terrible danger.

"He is more than that; he is a hero," said Chudleigh, earnestly.

Then there followed a moment's silence, both standing and looking at the dusty road.

Presently Chudleigh said:

"I have to thank you for a score of votes, not to speak of a larger number that cannot be plainly traced to you."

"You are quite welcome," she said, regaining her composure, but not venturing to look up. "I hope you will—"

"Why?" he said, so sharply that the blood rushed to her face. It was pale again when she answered in a calm, earnest voice that had something of entreaty in it:

"Because a member of parliament finds plenty to do, and hard work and something to think of are good for you."

"I understand," he replied, catching at her meaning.

"Good-morning," she said, holding out her hand again with a smile that ill masked the pain at her heart. "I shall hear you speak on the hustings directly."

He uncovered, took her hand, and the next moment she had gone.

He stood for a few seconds looking after her, then muttering: "If she were mine! if she were mine!" strode on towards the hustings.

Amidst the confusion and clamour, the yelling and shouting, the ballad singing and speechifying, the egg-throwing and cheering, the flaunting of blue, crimson, and yellow ribbons, and such a pandemonium of sounds as only an election can produce, Chudleigh Chichester was proclaimed at the head of the poll and duly elected member for the borough.

His speech had been a great and winning success. Mr. Gregson's rampant Liberalism and Mr. Giddson's *bona fide* investigative had fallen to dust and ashes beneath Chudleigh's outspoken determination to uphold the British throne and constitution, and whereas a climax he declared that he meant to be the working man's friend by voting for the reduction of taxes and the labour time, he was answered from the dense throng by a roaring cheer that made Mr. Jones rub his hands and whisper to Sir Fielding:

"There go at least a score of votes."

Yes, Chudleigh Chichester was a member of parliament, had defeated gloriously two powerful opponents, was renowned by an act of bravery, and gladdened his father's pride, yet as he stood up in the carriage whilst a hundred brawny men wheeled along, bowing with uncovered head, the victor of the day, his heart was heavy as it repeated the wistful cry of the morning:

"If she were only mine! if she were mine!"

Chudleigh's election necessitated his residence in town, accordingly a week after he had been returned Sir Fielding gave a grand political dinner, a complete gathering of the Tories, who feasted, drank, and toasted to the honour of Chudleigh, and made the Hall ring again with their well-bred cheers.

In the midst of the confusion of triumph and victory Maud reigned like a gentle queen, delighted at her brother's success, yet regretting the loss of the Gregsons' acquaintance, for Sir Fielding had repeated his command that she would not hold any intercourse with them, and consequently she was compelled to pass them in her walks or drives as if she had never known them.

The parting between the brother and sister was characteristic.

"Chud, dear Chud, you will come down to Grassmere often—as often as you possibly can," she murmured; "it will seem so lonely without you."

"Yes, Maudie, rely upon that," he replied, kissing her fair forehead. "It is not all play, and I shall be glad of a rest. Take care of Sir Fielding, and Maud, have you seen Carlotta lately?"

"No," said Maud, looking up into his face. "No. She never comes to the Hall, you know, Chud. Did you not see her when you were at Aunt Mildred's yesterday?"

Chudleigh shook his head.

"Chud?" she said, anxiously.

"Well?" he said, avoiding her eyes.

"Oh, Chud, tell me," she said, sorrowfully, "you will forget her."

His face darkened.

"You don't know what love is, Maudie," he said, darkly.

"Do I not?" she murmured as her face grew pale and her eyes lit up.

But he did not hear her, and with another kiss leapt into the dogcart.

On the road to the station he passed the stalwart figure of Maurice Durant leaning against the old gate, dressed as usual in his rough shooting clothes and carrying the gun with which he had saved Chudleigh's life.

Chudleigh told the groom to pull up, and, jumping down, ran back.

"I am going to town," he said, "and am delighted to have an opportunity of telling you how grateful I feel for your heroic rescue. It is the second time you have saved me and mine," he said, significantly. "First my heritage and then my life."

Maurice Durant grasped his hand with a stern, sad smile.

"You make too much of very light matters, Mr. Chichester," he said. "I am anxious to forget them if you will allow me. So you are going up to London to play the great game of politics. I fear me you will not find it worth the candle."

Chudleigh smiled rather sadly.

"Is any game worth the candle?" he said.

"None!" replied Maurice Durant, sternly. "If there be I have never found it, and there are few games, Mr. Chichester, this hand has not played," and he held out his long, sinewy hand with a gesture of disdain. "But life is a lesson. You are but in

the alphabet of the language of experience. Learn more and agree with me."

"Good-bye," said Chudleigh, with a tone of respect he could not help.

"And good speed!" said Maurice Durant, shaking his hand with a flash of his rare, gentle smile, and he had turned even before Chudleigh and was lost in the wood.

Once more the dogcart was doomed to halt upon its way, this time stopped by the soft glimmer of a muslin dress that shone through the railings of the Cottage garden gate.

Chudleigh at first determined to raise his hat and go on his way, but a man's heart is stronger than his pique, and he found himself standing beside the gate almost before he knew it.

"London!" repeated Carlotta as her hand lay in his for a moment. "I did not think you were going so soon."

"Till by the next train," he said, "and have only two minutes to spare."

"Do not let me keep you," she said, with a tremor in her voice.

His lips, still marked with the election affray, bent down to her ear.

"Carlotta, will you not say one kind word, even if it be the last?"

"I wish you every happiness," she faltered, grasping the gate with trembling hands.

He shook his head.

"Something less vain," he said, bitterly. "Rather wish me forgetfulness."

"I do," she said, still more faintly, raising her eyes to his face.

"And I do not," he said, sternly.

And so they parted, never to meet as Carlotta Lawley and Chudleigh Chichester again.

#### CHAPTER XXVII.

A victory is twice itself when the achiever brings home full numbers. Shakespeare.

LORD CROWNBRILLIANTS with a lover's proverbial haste had no sooner succeeded in purchasing the Retreat than he wanted to be married.

Carlotta at first positively refused to bestow herself upon him before the end of the year, but, backed up by Lady Mildred, his lordship eventually worried his beautiful betrothed into becoming Lady Crownbrilliant before the end of the summer.

So one fine morning early in August the little church at Grassmere was crammed with a fashionable company, and Lord Crownbrilliant, exquisitely adorned in blue broad cloth and fawn doekin, led Carlotta Lawley, daughter of the Captain Lawley of doubtful antecedents, to the altar.

The happy bridegroom had wished to make a grand affair of the ceremony, but Carlotta had stipulated that if she gave way as regarded time he must bend to her wish in the matter of privacy, so the marriage was celebrated in the quietest manner possible to Lord Crownbrilliant's rank and position, and the happy pair started for the Continent cheered by a very select but small number of guests.

Pale and unnaturally calm, Carlotta had gone through the ceremony with astonishing self-possession—rather shocking: the half-dozen young peers, who acted as bridesmaids, they evidently considering sobs and tears a legitimate part of the bride's rôle.

But Carlotta did not cry, neither did she smile, carrying her magnificent head with a stately coldness that alienated all remarks concerning her past life and want of rank, and setting everybody thinking how well she would bear the title that in a few minutes would be her due.

Some noticed that her eyes, though proud and almost defiant, were rather dim, and one young lady very acutely remarked that the countess had had "her cry" over night, little guessing of the fearful agony which had rent the beautiful bride's soul, and had ended in a heart-relieving torrent of tears the night before the irrevocable step was taken.

Sir Fielding and Maud were there of course—the latter had refused with all gentleness but great firmness to act as bridesmaid—and Chudleigh Chichester had been asked, but in a polite note he had pleaded parliamentary business as an excuse.

As no one could possibly penetrate the double door of his chambers it cannot be known if he, like the bride, gave way to his pain; but his friends, and he had many already, accused him of asceticism the following morning, and twitted him with his lack of spirits.

Carlotta had half dreaded he might, prompted by some indefinable jealousy, have been present at the sacrifice, and she was more than thankful when his note of refusal arrived, for, strong as she was in mind and body, she could not have answered for her strength if his eyes had been fixed on her while she swore and perjured herself before that most awful and just of all judges.



One other witness there had been besides the throng of invited guests, and that an unseen one.

Maurice Durant had passed the open church door in the middle of the service; and with darkened brow and moody eyes had paused, leaning on his gun, for one minute to take a glance at the bright-coloured group, and listen to the solemn adjuration of the bishop who had come down to marry his friend Lord Crownbrilliant.

Italy her ladyship had chosen as the place for the honeymoon to shine on, and accordingly a special steamer had been chartered to convey them thither.

After Carlotta's marriage Lady Mildred had closed the Cottage and taken refuge in the Hall.

This for two reasons.

The first because she really loved the fatherless girl and missed her companionship; and the second because Sir Fielding had suddenly come to the conclusion that his gentle Maud needed some loving woman friend beside her.

For Maud grew pale and thin; lost much of her old light-hearted sprightliness, and acquired a dreamy expression on her beautiful face, and in her lovely eyes, and was too fond of solitude for so young a girl.

Sir Fielding began to think that she missed Chudleigh, whom she loved with a love that even sisters seldom feel for their brothers, and a sister's love even at its ordinary standard is a great and wonderful thing.

"We will go up to town, to dear old Chud, Maudie," Sir Fielding had said, drawing her towards him one day as she came to him in the library. "You are looking pale and poorly; do you miss him much, my darling?"

For a moment a bright flush belied his words; but the next instant her face was pale again as she answered:

"I miss Chud, of course, papa, but not enough to make me unwell. I am not ill, really—not ill at all—only weak and—oh! a mere nothing, dear, dear papa."

"How long have you felt weak and low-spirited, my darling?" Sir Fielding had asked, and Maud had coloured afresh, lowering her lovely, wistful eyes, and flinging her arms round his neck.

"I—I—don't know," she whispered.

But she did, for her thoughts even as she spoke went back to the night when, in search of her diamond cross, she had seen the kindly form of Maurice Durant stretched lifeless amongst the tall, bedewed grass, and been held in his strong, gentle arms.

At that night its memory thrilled through her pure, innocent heart, she could feel even now the kindly, pitying pressure of the strong, tender hands, hear now the subtle music of the grand, heroic voice.

"Well, well, my darling, Aunt Mildred shall come and stay with us a little while; for I also am getting moped, and miss dear Chud, and then if neither of us improve we will go to London and try a little inland air and Chud."

So Lady Mildred came to stay at the Hall, and Maud was under strict, loving watch—a surveillance that, however tender, brought some sorrow, for she knew that she never more could, even by chance, meet the being who filled her heart and was gradually absorbing her whole existence.

The summer passed, and found neither Maud's colour improved nor Sir Fielding's spirits lightened, and the anxious father decided to pass the winter in town.

"Chudleigh will be down for a few weeks directly," he said to Lady Mildred; "we will wait till he is obliged to go back and then return with him. Of course you will come and look after Maud."

"I think a season in town—especially the winter—will do her good," said Lady Mildred. "I believe she wants a little change and a little gaiety. A few balls and one or two plays will do more good than all the physic in the world."

"By the way," continued her ladyship, who delivered this opinion on her return from a walk, "have you heard that the Gregsons intend selling the Folly?"

"No!" exclaimed Sir Fielding, looking up from his book. "Can it be true?"

"Oh, quite," said Lady Mildred. "I got it from young Parsons, the solicitor. He has instructions for the sale."

"I am not surprised at it," said Sir Fielding. "Nor I," said Lady Mildred. "Although I am rather sorry. It was a great pity they could not keep their place; they were getting on so nicely too! That election marred them, for of course no one would recognize them after you had relinquished their acquaintances."

"What could I do?" said Sir Fielding, really regretting the affair. "Could I be half fellow-well met with a man who plastered his bills over those of my son? Besides—" gesturing warm at the recollection, "it was a piece of impertinence."

"Well, well," said Lady Mildred, soothingly. "It was very unwise to visit them at all. It was Lord Crownbrilliant's doings. At any rate the two girls have made hits. The eldest is engaged to the Marquis Lantry, I hear."

"Can it be possible?—dear me, dear me!" said Sir Fielding. "I remember him, and—ahem!"

"Yes, he is a very naughty man, a very bad man indeed," said Lady Mildred, with a sigh, "but what's to be done? Men will be men."

"Yes; but there's no necessity for them to become blackguards," muttered Sir Fielding, meekly.

"Well, well," said Lady Mildred, a favourite ejaculation when her argument lost ground. "Miss Lavinia is engaged to him, and Bella very nearly to that boy lord—dear me, what's his name?"

"I don't remember," said Sir Fielding, taking up his book, and Lady Mildred, accepting the hint, retired.

Lady Mildred's news was perfectly correct in every item. The Gregsons were compelled to retreat; with the election they lost all the titled acquaintances. Lord Crownbrilliant and Sir Fielding's influence had procured them. Mr. Gregson discovered that his design in building the enormous Folly, living in the style of a sovereign and giving princely entertainments, had fallen through from excess of ambition, and therefore, wounded in temper and maddened by the "diabolical insolence of the aristocrats," as he termed it, he determined to leave Grassmere, sell the Folly and remove his pomposity and now-gotten wealth to pastures new.

It was some consolation to the girls that they had so far been successful in the snaring of two titled admirers; but to Tom the quittal of Grassmere was a severe blow, for he was still madly in love with Maud—though hopelessly he felt assured—and knew he could never be happy anywhere else.

"I'm not so sure that I shall leave Grassmere," he said when his despotic parent's determination was communicated to him. "I shall go and live at the inn—or take a small house somewhere in the neighbourhood."

"Oh, you will, will you?" roared his father. "Then you'll pay your own bills and rent, sir, let me tell you."

Which of course settled the matter, and Tom was obliged to decamp with the family, who left the Folly as they had arrived, in the full pomp of plated ornaments and gaudy liveries, "retiring," as Lady Mildred remarked, "like the sun in a sea of crimson and gold."

So the autumn came, finding things very quiet at Grassmere, the Chichesters going on in their quiet way, the rector a desolate, solitary one—for save a glimpse of his stalwart figure in the woods, the dashing of his dog after a rabbit or the report of his deadly gun in the copse, none, with the exception of the deaf-and-dumb housekeeper, had any communication with him; and then my Lord and Lady Crownbrilliant returned to England and to the Retreat, which had been in course of the most elaborate preparation for their reception.

Two days after their arrival Mr. Chudleigh Chichester alighted at the Annsleigh Railway Station, on his birthday visit to the Hall, and the first thing that met his eye as he stepped into the road was Lord Crownbrilliant's carriage, from which his lordship rushed out to seize him by the hand, looking more exquisite than ever—his hair parted down the middle and lying flat upon his narrow forehead, and the inevitable eye-glass stuck in his right eye.

"Ah, Mr. Chichester, I'm delighted!—But Jove, how strange! how very wum I should wun against you the v-v-very minute you awoke. Going to the Hall? Sir F-F-Fielding quite well—saw him this morning—so Miss Chichester. Wum thing, telling you bow your own f-f-father and sister are! had had. And how's P-P-Parliament getting on?—I h-hate politics. S-S-Stupid things, I think—so v-very wid-i-oulous. I n-n-never go into the H-House unless I can help it."

Chudleigh smiled and thought his lordship's absence no very great loss to the House of Lords, but instead of saying so asked after Lady Crownbrilliant.

"O-Carlotta" (how the other man winced as he heard the loved name flung by the only person who had any right to use it)—"O-Carlotta is v-very well, j-j-jolly. You must come and see us directly you can. Come to-morrow and stay!"

Little did he think as Chudleigh murmured the few conventional words of acceptance that with his own hands he was dragging down the thunder-cloud that hung over his head!

#### CHAPTER XXVIII.

True love can never die, and though it sleep

'Twill wake again.

Maud's face regained a little of its colour at sight of her brother, and Sir Fielding something of his light spirits.

They both noticed that Chudleigh looked unwell

—pale and worn; but he explained the haggardness by assuring them that it was the result of his parliamentary toils, and so they, not suspecting the terrible rent in his heart, thought him a hero, and begged him to prolong his holiday beyond the limits originally arranged.

But this could not be, Chudleigh said, for he was feeling ambitious—the success of his maiden speech in the House had made him that—and he was anxious to do all he could to aid his party, then in a critical position.

The dinner was a most enjoyable one in the old oak banquet-room, Chudleigh having most of the talking, and the rest only too delighted to listen; and when they parted for the night there was enough of serene happiness on Chudleigh's face to warrant Maud comforting herself with the assurance that he, at least, had forgotten his ill-starred love. It never occurred to her to think that the flush of serenity might be occasioned by his nearness to Carlotta and to the joy of expectancy; indeed, he had omitted all mention of the Retreat, and had not even told them that he had promised to call there the following day.

The morrow being one of those autumn days that outline the summer, Chudleigh determined to ride his old bay mare over to the Retreat, and started at twelve o'clock with a fast-beating heart and a flush that would have belied his sister's anxiety for his health.

He was pale enough, however, as he dismounted, and, going into the drawing-room, waited the arrival of his mistress—and paler still when the door opened, and, dressed in a simple morning costume, which set her figure off to perfection, Carlotta—Lady Crownbrilliant—entered.

She came forward with an easy smile—thought Chudleigh, who knew every expression of the beautiful face, read the quiver of the upper lip aright—and said:

"This is an unexpected pleasure, Mr. Chichester. When did you arrive?"

"Yesterday," said Chudleigh, dropping her hand and sinking into a chair. "Did not Lord Crownbrilliant tell you that we met at the station?"

"No," she said, with a slight flush, adding quickly, as if to avoid all farther mention of her husband's name:

"Have you been well? You do not look so well as when I last saw you."

It was his turn to colour now, and he flushed hotly as he remembered her standing at the gate and his last vain appeal.

"I am very well," he said, carelessly. "We have had rather a hard season—exceptionally hard."

"I read your speech—I mean the first, for I have read them all—and thought it a grand one. I wish I could have heard it."

"Do you?" he said, eagerly, but cooling again with a sigh. "I am glad you liked it," he added. "You recognized it, no doubt. It was an amplification of some remarks you made on the subject at the Hall."

"I—I—did not remember them," she said, departing slightly from strict truth, for she did, and felt a thrill of delight at his using them.

"They made the success of the thing," he said, earnestly. "But you have not told me if you have been well."

"I—yes," she said. "Oh, yes, very well."

"And enjoyed Italy and the whole trip?"

"Yes," she said, with an air of weariness.

Then there came a silence—Chudleigh's heart too full to speak, hers too frightened, for she feared lest by sign or word she should touch the mine of love she saw in his eyes and heard in the tones of his voice.

"This is a pretty place," at last said Chudleigh.

"Yes," she said. "Will you come and see more of it?"

And they walked out into the dining-room and the conservatories, praising and criticizing as they had done in the old time that morning he had taken her to see the Cottage.

In the garden they came upon Lord Crownbrilliant, lying stretched upon a seat, a cigar in his mouth and a large tuskard of champagne within reach. His lordship was rather fond of champagne cup.

After a chat with him Chudleigh returned to the house and took his leave.

"Maud will be here in a minute, I daresay," he said. "I was obliged to come before her, having a long list of influential constituents whom I must not neglect."

She held out her hand.

"Good-bye, then. You will not neglect us; we are your constituents, remember."

He pressed her hand lightly.

"May I come—often?"

"We shall always be glad to see you," she replied, in a low voice.

"We!" echoed Chudleigh.

"Well, I, then," she said, flushing, and, snatching her hand away as his lips nearly touched it, she said good-bye once more.

Chudleigh's constituents, notwithstanding their influence, were neglected that morning, for he turned his horse's head towards the moor, and spent the remainder of the morning in a breakneck gallop.

From that morning a terrible temptation assailed him.

His visits to the Retreat were constant.

Scarcely a day passed but he might be found sitting beside Lady Crownbrilliant in the drawing-room, at her feet on the velvet lawn, or facing her in the little outgrigger on the river. It is true not a word had passed between them that might not have been said in Lord Crownbrilliant's hearing; but still—well, eyes are eloquent, and a touch of a passionate hand says more than a thousand love sentences.

Carlotta, fully aware of her danger as she was, having a clear view of the precipice and a knowledge of the fearful abyss that lay beneath, yet could not resist the delight of his presence, the touch of his hand, the passionate yet mournful ring of his earnest voice.

And Lord Crownbrilliant—well, he was either an idiot or blind. A little of both, perhaps; but if he had any uneasy sensation his self-love and conceit set them halfway at rest, and frequent applications to the wine-bottle laid them entirely.

For Lord Crownbrilliant was growing fond of the half-hour after dinner, and the libations that occupied it. He drank frequently and liberally, and although Carlotta had not yet seen him quite intoxicated, she had noticed, with a vivid horror, that he was frequently excited and strange-mannered when entering the drawing-room after dinner or returning from a race-meeting or a steeplechase.

So the autumn grew late and the trees bare; Chudleigh still in Grassmere, or rather at Annalsleigh, lying at Carlotta's feet or pulling her down the river in the little boat; Maud still growing paler and thinner; and Maurice Durant still mysteriously buried in the solitude of the Rectory and the woods.

In October Sir Fielding declared his intention of starting for town, and Chudleigh was despatched to take a house in Grosvenor Square.

Lord Crownbrilliant, somewhat tired of the country, and longing vaguely for the delight of town life, at once decided to take flight too, so that by the middle of October both families were in town—Lord Crownbrilliant in Park Lane, and Sir Fielding Chichester in Grosvenor Square, within easy walking distance of each other.

(To be continued.)

## WARNED BY THE PLANETS.

### CHAPTER LXV.

IMMEDIATELY the music changed. Instead of "The Campbells are Coming," the sweet, alluring numbers of "Highland Mary" filled the waiting silence, and, looking down with strained eyes, Maggie distinctly saw the figure remove his hat and wave it aloft in the moonlight. And she knew that her signal had been observed.

She turned again to her candle, but the last fitful gleam was gone, nothing remained but the black, smoking socket—and that long, black staircase before her. If she remained in the tower till day-dawn, no ray of light would penetrate to that dreadful secret passage-way, and she would be risking the chance of discovery. She must try it in the dark. Lord Strathspay lay below in that awful dungeon. She must not fail him. Heaven would help her.

She took up her candlestick. The music had ceased, the moon had gone under a scudding cloud, and an owl hooted dimly. With an unspoken prayer in her heart she began the awful descent.

Down and down she went, winding round and round till her brain grew dizzy, feeling her way from step to step—the darkness so thick it made her gasp for breath—strange, phosphorescent lights flashing before her dilated eyes, ghostly hands seeming to clutch at her in the gloom, unearthly voices to whisper and gibber in her ears—through the very shadow and darkness of death, groping, falling, trembling with nervous horror, yet brave and determined at heart.

The time of her descent seemed like an eternity, but it ended at last. Her groping hands struck the trap-door; she made her way through, and caught a pallid glimmer from the moonlight that streamed through the barred casement in her own chamber. She got through the aperture, slid back the oaken panel, arranged the dusty tapestry, and then, tottering across the room, threw herself upon the old state-bed in an agony of weakness and weariness.

The voice of Mother Gwynneth aroused her from a deep sleep, the sleep of utter exhaustion. She

started up with a thrill of terror. The sun was shining in at the window, and the old woman was placing the tray containing her breakfast on the table.

"Ye slumber late, my lassie," she remarked as Maggie sprang up, all dressed, as she had thrown herself down; "ye must a kept bad hours last night; see"—pointing to the empty candlestick—"yer candle's burnt out."

"I like to burn my light all night in this ghostly place," replied Maggie, quietly, but thrilling with terror lest the dust on her clothes or some disarrangement about the room should betray her; "and I got to rummaging among the dusty old books too, to pass away the time—'tis awfully dull shut up in this way, my good woman."

"Weel, weel," responded the old woman, her eyes gleaming wickedly, "'twas yer own stubborn will as brung ye here; why dinna ye marry the young laird at once?"

"Because I was foolish, I daresay," said Maggie, obeying a sudden determination to pretend she was being conquered, in order to ward off suspicion; "but Lord Angus should have been patient and not whiked me off, and shut me up like a prisoner. I can't forgive him."

"Yes, ye can," coaxed Mother Gwynneth. "Why, he done it all for love of ye, and he be a braw young laird as any lassie need be proud to win. Ye'll forgive him an' meet him wi' a kiss when he gets back from Lunnnon, won't ye now?"

Maggie tossed her head with a charming, coquettish air.

"When does he come?" she asked.

"To-morrow, mebbe; he thought to be gone a week, but Berkit come last night an' says he'll be back sooner—so ye may be a lookin' yer puttiest. Coom, here's yer breakfast all hot now; sit ye down an' eat, an' don't fret any more; I shall be busy to-day, since the young laird cooms to-morrow."

She left the room, looking it after her, and Maggie heard her go shuffling down the great staircase, with the bloodhound whining at her heels. He followed the old creature wherever she went.

To-morrow! Lord Angus coming back to-morrow! Oh, what should she do? How should she escape? She sat for a long time in deep thought. There seemed to be no hope, and she came to her decision in silent calmness. If the worst came, she would slip through the aperture, replace the sliding panel, and lie down in the awful gloom somewhere below and die. They would never find her, for it was evident they knew nothing of the secret passage. But it would be a dreadful end to life, and her old father mourning over her loss.

And the Earl of Strathspay. At thought of him she started up. The remembrance of his white face and hungry eyes thrilled her with new hope. She crossed over to the table. The breakfast was very tempting, and she was weak and hungry. She ate one cake, a little bit of the broiled bacon, and swallowed a mouthful of tea; the remainder she reserved for the poor sufferer below. But dare she attempt to make the descent by daylight? What if some one should enter her room and find the panel open, the secret staircase revealed? But she could not bear to let the earl famish throughout the long, long day. She resolved to risk it.

Taking her food in her apron as before, she removed the panel and hurried down. When she reached the vault she was breathless.

The peer, reclining on his bed of stone, heard her coming and arose to meet her, his white face eager and smiling.

It had seemed an eternity since she left him.

She spread her breakfast before him and invited him to partake of it.

"But, my little friend," he said, gravely, his eyes turning with wistful longing toward the food, in spite of his will, "I cannot prolong my life at the cost of yours—you bring me your food while you are starving!"

"Oh, no," cried Maggie. "No, indeed, I have eaten some, and I shall have more at noon—please eat it, and try to get your strength; you will need it all. And I must leave you again this moment. I will come again—in the meantime remain quiet and do not despair. The darkest hour is just before the dawn."

She fled away as she had come, with noiseless steps, up the spiral stairs, and back to her prison. The morning wore away.

Noon came, and a hot September sun blazed down upon the hoary battlements; the long, long afternoon, the cool, gray twilight followed, and at last the silent night.

Maggie threw aside the old volume she had been trying in vain to read, and went to the window with a sigh of relief.

The day had seemed so endless and she had longed for the night with a vague hope—a groundless hope, alas, for there was not the most remote possibility of escape.

Yet she had longed with feverish impatience for

the darkness, and welcomed it now, and watched the great white stars flashing out in the far-off sky, with tear-dimmed eyes.

Her keeper came up with her supper, and a little morsel of candle, that would not last through half the night.

"I won't have ye watching the night through an' makin' a ghost o' yerself," she said. "Go to bed like a gude lassie: yer braw young sweetheart will be here to-morrow."

Maggie shuddered and sat down by the casement, that foolish, vague hope still tormenting her. She reserved her supper for the earl, intending to take it down to him by-and-by.

Slowly the hours went by, and Maggie sat there counting her own heart-beats.

She could hear the fir trees moaning in the September winds, and sea beating on the sands below, and at last, after weary, weary waiting, she heard that for which she had hoped with such feverish unrest—the sweet flute-notes set to the music of the dear old song, "The Campbells are Coming."

Assured now that it was intended as a signal to herself, she arose, in a tremor of excitement, and lit her bit of candle.

Then she made her way out, and started up the dizzy stairs again.

Impatience winged her feet, and she made the long and tiresome ascent very speedily.

A stout wind was blowing when she reached the tower-chamber, and she hurried her candle into a sheltered corner lest it should be blown out. Then she tore a strip from her apron, and twisted it into a wisp, lit it at the blaze, and, hastening to the window, threw it out as before.

The wind caught it and whirled it away, like a flaming pennon in the darkness, and swift as thought from below came the dulcet numbers of "Highland Mary."

Maggie knew that she was answered. A delicious thrill stirred her heart, and a bright bloom suffused her waxen cheeks as she gazed down the dizzy distance. She could see a man's figure crossing the barren heath below, and raising an arm, over and on, with a warning gesture.

She watched the tall, dark figure with fascinated eyes. It approached the base of the ruins with rapid steps, and then she lost sight of it. Still she did not remove her fascinated gaze, but continued to lean over the stone sill, her eyes strained down into the shadowy depths below. Ten minutes passed in dead silence. Then, all at once, a strain of exquisite melody broke on her ear. Wonder of wonders, it came, not from the heath below, but from some near point. Her heart throbbed with painful rapidity, and she drew back half in terror.

Ten minutes more! The great owl, startled from his roost in the ivy, flew out with a wild cry, and in the after silence the girl caught, at intervals, the sound of hoarse, panting respirations. Impelled by some emotion stronger than her terror, she leaned far out into the night, and she caught sight of a man's head protruding above the clustering ivy.

A low, startled cry escaped her lips. It was instantaneously answered.

"Be quiet," spake a clear, firm voice, a voice that inspired her with confidence and courage; "do not fear: I am coming to help you."

"Come on!" she responded, still leaning out.

The ivy vines, that clung about the lofty tower, began to shake and rustle, the panting respirations came nearer, and presently the man's head came distinctly into view—a handsome, blonde head, and a pair of shining, resolute blue eyes. Their owner was accomplishing the daring feat of climbing the "Border Watch-tower" by aid of the ivy vines that covered it.

He came up cautiously, but fearlessly, now clinging by his arms, now finding a foothold against the rugged masonry.

Maggie grew faint as she watched him, but he smiled up into her white face as he hung over him in the silvery moonlight; and in another breath he swung himself up to the window-sill and leaped in.

Covered with perspiration and almost gasping from his great exertion, his close-fitting hunting jacket torn into shreds, his handsome face flushed, his blonde curls all in a tumble, yet Maggie knew him in an instant. He was the young stranger who had drawn her from under the horses' feet at the "Lion and the Unicorn," and to whom she appealed for help when Lord Angus forced her away. Her eyes brightened, and a lovely colour rose to her cheeks. She extended her hand with a shy but exquisite grace.

"I remember you," she said, simply; "and you have risked your life to come to me!"

The young man bowed, and took the cold little fingers in his own shapely hand.

"No, not quite that," he replied, "'twas a close thing, I'll admit, but I've a talent for climbing, and the ivy is strong and safe. My life was in no danger. But I'm glad you remember me," he added, with a flashing glance, "because I've never forgotten you for one single moment; sleeping or waking you



face has haunted me. I knew you were not mad, as they asserted, and I determined to save you. I followed the carriage that bore you away that night, and saw you conveyed into this place; and, finding no other mode of entrance, you see, I've climbed the gory vulture's nest—and now what can I do for you?"

"Help me to escape," replied Maggie, promptly. "If I remain till to-morrow, a fate worse than death will be mine."

He considered for a moment, his handsome face turned towards the setting moon.

"First, tell me," he replied then, "how you ever managed to get up here, if, as I infer, you have been held a prisoner; you surely did not ascend by the secret staircase?"

"Yes, I did," Maggie replied. "I discovered it by chance, and came up here attracted by the sound of your flute—but I fancied no one knew that such a staircase existed."

The young man smiled, showing his handsome white teeth.

"You fancied rightly—I stumbled upon it by chance, like yourself, when this old place was unoccupied, and I was here on an investigating tour, but I can't well believe that you had courage to ascend it."

"I did!" said Maggie; "I would go through the gates of death I think to make my escape."

He flashed another glance upon her from his blue bright eyes.

"Come then," he said, "we have no time to lose, and there is but one way; the doors and gates are barred and bolted, and Mother Gwynneth and her bloodhound are playing sentinel; we must go down by the ivy."

Maggie started in surprise, and grew a shade paler as she glanced down the dizzy distance.

"There's no danger," replied the stranger, encouragingly; "if you will only trust me, I will save you. Come!"

He held out his hand, and Maggie drew near.

"Now you'll have to cling to me with all your strength—here, this way, so that I can use my hands in descending, and do not fear—you look like a brave girl."

She permitted him to clasp her close, while she twined her arms about his stalwart shoulders. He was just on the point of springing through the window when she uttered a quick cry.

"Oh, I had forgotten!" she exclaimed; "how utterly selfish I am in my eagerness to save myself. There is another prisoner in this old castle—away down in the old donjon keep the Earl of Strathapey lies dying. We must save him—I won't leave him behind."

The young man turned and faced her, a curious expression in his eyes.

"What do you say?" he cried; "the Earl of Strathapey a prisoner here?"

"Yes; his own son, or the boy rather who has been reared as his son, lured him here by a false letter, and locked him in the donjon to die. Providence sent me down to him, I think, and I saved his life by sharing my food with him."

"And why should this boy lure his father here, and leave him to die?" questioned the stranger, a slight tremor running through his clear voice.

"The earl suspects that the boy is not his son, and talks of renouncing him, and the young man wants to murder him and secure the earldom!"

For the space of a minute the young man stood silent, a slow flush rising to his fair, clear-cut face.

"Well," he ejaculated, at last, "of all strange things this is the strangest, the Earl of Strathapey incarcerated here by his son and heir. I can scarcely believe it."

"It is true," cried Maggie, eagerly; "and he will die, he looks like death now, and I have carried him no food since morning. Oh, sir, can't you help him?"

"Of course I will—I'll rouse the officers of the law, and ransack this old ghost-nest from top to bottom."

"But every moment is precious," interposed Maggie; "to-morrow will bring here the young Lord Angus, as he is called, falsely enough, too, for I have the proof that he is no son of the earl."

"What, you have the proof?"

"Yes—I found it, as I seem to find everything, by mere chance, in the flannel mantle worn by that poor little babe that was found on the Tyrol mountain—the written proof that—"

"Hist!" cried the young man, catching at her arm, "there's a carriage below—put out your candle—quick!"

Maggie darted across to the corner in which the candle flickered, and extinguished it with a breath, then she turned to the window, gazing cautiously down.

A two-wheeled vehicle containing a couple of men was bowling up the gravel walk.

In a second they paused before the great gate, and one of them leaped out, and proceeded to unlock it. Maggie had a fair view of the other as he sat in the white moonlight.

"Oh, Heavens," she whispered, her cheeks paling with terror, "it is Lord Angus, the earl's son; we are lost!"

"Nay," replied the stranger, "not lost yet. See they have entered—Mother Gwynneth's bloodhound bids them welcome. Come."

He clasped her firmly with one arm, and approached the window.

"But the earl?" gasped Maggie, shivering with terror as she heard the fierce baying of the beast below.

"I'll save him," replied the young man, quietly; "but you must be got into a safe place first. Come—the moments are precious."

And clasping her once more he leaped lightly through the window and swung himself out.

"Now cling to me with all your might," he said, gently, "and don't look down; keep your eyes on the moon. Poor little dove, do not tremble so—I'll not let you fall."

He swung himself out, holding on by the window sill, and Maggie clasped him close with her lithe young arms, her wide brown eyes fixed upon the white September moon, dropping slowly out of sight behind the Scottish hills.

Down he went, swinging himself from one twisting vine to another, never for one moment loosening his firm clasp.

Maggie could feel his heart throbbing with great bounds, and hear him breathing in gasps, so tremendous was his exertion.

High fellowship begets love, it is said, and I think the old doctor's fair daughter verified the old saying in her hazardous descent that night.

If she did not love this brave young stranger who held her so firmly in his arms and risked his life for her sake, with every breath he drew, her heart was filled with a boundless gratitude.

Down and down, from one gnarled vine to another, past the hoary battlements, past the mullioned windows, now suspended in mid air, anon sliding down the rugged rock, deceived by a treacherous hold, but safe at last!

Maggie's feet touched the crisp, brown soil of the blighted heath at the base of the great tower; his brave knight relaxed his firm clasp, reeled for a moment, panting and gasping for breath, and then stood nobly erect.

"Oh, what shall I ever do to repay you?" began Maggie in her gratitude.

But he cut her short.

"Hush!" he said, grasping her hand; "we shall have the bloodhound at our heels. Come!"

He hurried her across the heath, round the skirt of the fir thicket, and under the base of the mountain, toward the cavern known as the "Hermit's Cave."

The entrance was indescribably gloomy in the fitful light of the setting moon; a great, yawning chasm opening under a rocky roof, curtained by black fir-branches, and rank-growing vines.

He smiled down upon her as they came near this dismal entrance, something unutterably tender and reassuring in his bright, resolute eyes.

"Don't be afraid, little one," he said, kindly; "you have been very brave to-night. We are safe now—a friend of mine lives in this gloomy cave—a good and wise old man, whose hospitality we must share to-night. You can trust me, can you not?"

"I can trust you," said Maggie, quietly.

He led her on through a kind of rocky tunnel, dark and damp, which led at last to a wide, reverberating cavern.

Away at the remote end a taper glimmered, and as they drew near Maggie perceived a little square compartment formed in a turn of the cavern, fitted up as a human dwelling.

At their approach an old man, wearing the garb of an ancient monk, with a black cowl on his head, and a white, flowing beard appeared in the entrance.

"Who comes?" he demanded, his voice awaking a thousand sepulchral echoes.

"A friend!" responded the young man.

At the sound of his voice the hermit advanced to meet them.

"You are welcome, my son," he said; then his eye falling on Maggie, who clung to her deliverer's arm half in terror, he added: "You have succeeded, I see—come, my child, extending his hand to her, the hermit bids you welcome."

He led her into his rude little temple, and seated her on the bench before the wood fire that blazed in one corner.

"You are white and cold," he said, turning to a small table and pouring some wine from a flask; "drink this, it will do you good."

Maggie obeyed, and felt the rare old vintage tingling through her chilled veins, and bringing a glow to her cheeks.

"And you, my son," continued the hermit, turning to the young man, "look worn out—a drop will renew your strength."

But the young man shook his head.

"No wine for me," he said, smiling, "but a glass

of cold water, if you please—and five minutes to breathe in, then I must leave this young lady in your care and be off again—the Earl of Strathapey is a prisoner in the old donjon."

The hermit turned in amazement.

"The Earl of Strathapey a prisoner? How can that be?"

"The man who bears his name, who has been reared as his son, has confined him there to die."

"And wherefore?"

"To secure the earldom—the earl doubted that he was in truth his son, and talked of renouncing him."

For a minute the two looked into each other's eyes, and then the hermit laid his hand upon the young man's shoulder.

"I see," he answered, solemnly; "Romulus, my son, Heaven's justice may be slow, but it is sure."

The young man sat silent an instant, and then he arose.

"I must not delay," he said "every moment tells—and the earl must be rescued this night."

"Why not call out the proper authorities, and have the ruins searched?" suggested the hermit.

"That would take time in this wilderness," replied the other, "and the earl's enemies would be pretty sure to murder him while a pair of officers are pounding at the gates. No; I'll try it myself—I've climbed the tower twice to-night, and I'll make the third attempt. I can get on better without help than with it."

He started down the cavern, and then turned back abruptly.

"If anything should befall me," he said, coolly, "and I don't return, you will see this young lady is restored to her friends."

"I will," replied the hermit; "but, my son, do not rashly throw away your life."

"I shall save the earl, and myself too, if possible," was his quiet answer; "I think I'm a match for Mother Gwynneth and all her emissaries, the bloodhound included."

He took a short knife from a crevice overhead, and put it in his belt as he spoke. Maggie watched him with whitening cheeks, her very heart sinking within her. She arose and extended her hand.

"You risked your life to save me," she faltered, "and I have not even thanked you—and now—"

"My success in saving you is ample reward," he returned, taking her trembling hand and retaining it in his firm clasp. "You are not afraid to remain here?" he added; "why do you tremble so?"

"Not afraid—oh, no, not for myself—but for your safety," she murmured, dropping her eyes shyly beneath his gaze.

A sudden light flashed over his handsome face, and he raised the little hand he held to his lips, with grave reverence.

"Do not fear," he replied, gently, "I shall come to no harm—farewell!"

He turned again to go, but looked back, struck by a sudden remembrance.

"You said you had proof," he said, "that this man who bears the earl's name is not his son. May I ask what proof?"

Maggie resumed her seat, and with a deprecating glance and a movement of exquisite grace and modesty removed the boot from her dainty foot, and extracted the yellow paper from its hiding-place beneath the lining.

"I put it there for safe keeping," she explained as she handed it to the young man. "I had only found it when I was drugged and forced from home."

He ran it over with his keen blue eyes, a hot flush mounting to his cheeks. Then he passed it to the hermit.

"Little girl," he said, turning again to Maggie, "I think there is some power higher and more divine than mere chance at work for us all to-night. You will think so too by-and-bye. Good-bye!"

And with a bow and a smile he disappeared, and Maggie was left with the hermit in the cave.

(To be continued.)

THE BRAIN.—One of the most pernicious errors into which literary people sometimes fall is that of supposing that those who work only with their brains need less food than those who labour with the hands. This has been the cause of untold mischief. Students and literary men have often been the victims of slow starvation from ignorance of the fact that mental labour causes greater waste of tissue than muscular. According to careful estimates, three hours of hard study wear out the body more than a whole day on the farm. Phosphorus is an essential ingredient of the brain, and its consumption increases in proportion to the amount of labour which the organ is required to perform. This wear and tear of the brain are easily measured by careful examination of the salt in liquid excretions. The importance of the brain as a working organ is shown by the amount of blood it receives, which is proportionally greater than any other part of the body

One-fifth of the blood goes to the brain, though its average weight is only one-fortieth of the weight of the body. This fact alone would be sufficient to prove that brain workers need more and better food than mechanics and farm labourers.

## LADY CHETWYND'S SPECTRE.

### CHAPTER I.

THE island of St. Kilda, the outermost island of the Outer Hebrides, lies a hundred and fifty miles to the westward of Scotland, and is a mere rock in the midst of a lonely and fretful sea. It is three miles long by two miles broad. Its coast is bordered with abrupt sea-cliffs and lofty, naked precipices, inaccessible save to the countless screaming wild-fowl which haunt them.

The climate of this desolate islet comprises six months of winter, in which no vessel dare approach the storm-lashed rock, and in which, therefore, no token of the outside world can come to the islanders.

They are dependent in great part for their food upon what they obtain from the main land, and twice a year, in April and October, supplies are sent to them.

The inhabitants of St. Kilda numbered, at the last census, seventy-eight souls. Their principal occupations are fowling and fishing, the former being exceedingly perilous, and requiring great nerve and dexterity.

Their village is situated on the west bay. Prominent among the humble, thatched dwellings are the small church and the manse, in which resides with his family the pastor of this lone sea parish.

One October afternoon, a few years ago, a girl stood upon the summit of one of the dizzy and beetling cliffs overlooking the bay and the great, restless Atlantic, at a point to which few of the daring young fowlers of St. Kilda would have dared to climb.

Her garments were blowing in the free salt wind. Her unbound hair streamed behind her in a dun cloud. Her dusky eyes were shaded by one slender brown hand, and gazed down upon the waters of the bay with keen and unostentatious glances.

She was scarcely seventeen years old, and as wild and free as the birds circling above her.

She was not beautiful—she was too thin and dark for beauty—but there was the promise of a glorious loveliness in the passionate young face, in the tremulously eager mouth, and in the delicately cut features.

She was as brown as a gipsy, and as light and lithe, with a gipsy grace in her slender figure and fearless attitude, a tender sweetness in her large brown eyes, and a shade of natural laughter upon the broad, frank, noble brows.

She was known as Bernice Gwellan, the adopted daughter of the Rev. David Gwellan, the pastor of St. Kilda.

She had spent nearly all her life on the island. She remembered no shores save these rocky bluffs, no people save these rude inhabitants of St. Kilda. But she was not like them.

The good minister and his wife, the former Welsh by birth, the latter a Scotch woman, were of gentle birth, educated and accomplished, and fitted to adorn a refined society.

The worthy pair had carefully educated their young charge, teaching her music, various languages and all the accomplishments known to themselves. She was an apt scholar, refined even to daintiness, noble, sweet, and true as truth itself, but they had long since despaired of making of her a parish teacher. She was like an eaglet in the nest of the dove, and her foster-parents were full of misgivings in regard to her future.

What was to become of her? She would never marry one of her rude native admirers. Would she fret out her life on this island rock, or would the eaglet some day find its wings and fly to a fairer shore?

Ah, the time was nearer than the good couple thought! The eaglet had found its wings, and they were already poised for flight.

As Bernice stood upon the dangerous pinnacle of rock, her red gown fluttering in the wind, her wandering glances became fixed on a sight rare indeed in those waters. A graceful pleasure yacht was lying at anchor in the bay below. A boat manned by four seamen was pushing off towards the shore, and in the stern of the boat lounged the owner of the yacht, the young Marquis of Chetwynd.

Glancing upwards, he beheld the girl's figure upon the perilous point of rock. He turned pale and waved his handkerchief to her, making a gesture to her to descend.

The girl's face lit up with a glow that for the moment transformed it into surpassing beauty. Answering the signal of the young man, she began her descent, leaping from crag to crag like a chamois, while he watched her progress with suspended breath.

At last, as the boat struck the beach, Bernice came to a halt in a natural grotto, from which the descent to the shore was not difficult. This grotto was, it seemed, her favourite resort, for its rude floor was covered with mats roughly braided of seaweeds, and there were several volumes of poetry hidden in the crevices around her, as well as a guitar of exquisite workmanship.

It was here the young marquis presently found her. He entered the grotto, and advanced towards her with outstretched hands, but she retreated before him, shy and coquettish, and circling him, was again at the mouth of the grotto and out upon the crags.

"Bernice," said the young lord, in a tone of exclamation, "is this your welcome of me? You are as shy of me as yonder eider-ducks. Yet you have said that you love me."

"Girls don't mean all they say," interrupted Bernice, saucily. "I wonder what brought you up here to-day, Lord Chetwynd. But as you are here let us finish reading 'Maud.' Will you get out the Tennyson, or shall I?"

The young lord's face grew pale and stern.

He was very handsome after the purest Saxon type, with fair hair and blue eyes, and with a golden moustache shading his firm mouth and drooping upon his delicate chin. He was tall and slender, refined in appearance almost to effeminacy, yet his taper fingers were capable of a grip of iron, and his blue eyes had in them at times a light like the flashing of a polished steel sword in the sunlight. He was brave as a lion. He was noble to his heart's core. He scorned a falsehood; was honourable even to Quixotism, was generous, unselfish—was, in short, the grandest, noblest type of a gentleman. To simple, island-bred little Bernice he seemed a demigod.

"Women are all alike," said his lordship, bitterly. "Let one grow up all alone, in the desert of Sahara even, and she will inevitably be a coquette. I have not come here to-day to read Tennyson, Bernice. Our summer idyl is over. I left home in May for a three months' trip to Norway and Denmark, and, having strayed to St. Kilda in August, have remained here since. The long winter of storm and snow will soon close in upon this island, when no vessel can enter or leave this bay, and I must go. My skipper is full of prophecies of evil if we linger. In short, Bernice, the 'Sylvia' will sail to-morrow."

The girl started, her brown cheeks paling, and a frightened look leaping to her eyes.

"To-morrow!" she echoed. "So soon! Oh, Roy, I had not thought that you must ever leave St. Kilda. To-morrow! Oh, no, you are joking. Say, Roy, that you are only teasing me."

"Shall you care, then?" cried the young lord, eagerly. "I must go, Bernice. I have friends, duties, a place in life, and I cannot stay longer here. My friends have not heard from me for four months, and they will be anxious about me. They think me in Norway still. You see I must go, Bernice, but I need not go alone. I came here to-day to ask you to go with me as my wife. I love you better than all the world. My love for you is like that wild, mad passion Romeo felt for Juliet. Two months ago I did not know that you lived; to-day you are my life, my soul, the one being to me of all the universe. Bernice, I will not go without you!"

"I cannot let you leave me," she whispered. "Oh, Roy, this world would be dark to me without you. How have I lived until I knew you? Another winter at St. Kilda, shut in by the angry Atlantic and the frightful winds, would be unendurable to me after this bright, sweet, late summer. But you are rich and titled, Roy, and I am only a poor island girl. Will you never become tired of me? Will you never be ashamed of me? Will you never regret the generous love that impels you to make me your wife?"

"Love levels all ranks," Bernice, and you and I are equal. I have money and title; you have genius and goodness and a strange power of fascination. I would rather be your husband than be king of all the earth."

"But, Roy, what will your friends say?"

"I have neither father nor mother," said the young marquis, half sadly, "and as my uncles and aunts do not consult me about their plans they will scarcely expect me to consult them about mine. My nearest friends cannot justly be called my relatives, Bernice. They share my home, and will be your nearest friends and companions. They are my step-brother and step-sister, the children of my mother's second husband, and they are especially dear to me."

"You never spoke of them to me before, Roy."

"Did I not? It must be because when I am with you I can think of no one but you," said Lord Chetwynd, smiling brightly and lovingly down upon her. "I must make amends for my silence now. My father died in my early boyhood, Bernice. I was Lord Chetwynd before I went to Eaton. My mother, a fair and gentle lady whom you would have loved, remained a widow for some years, and finally married a second time, while I was at Oxford. Her second husband was Colonel the Honourable Gilbert

Monk, the brother of an earl, an old East Indian officer, a dark-browed man, of wonderful fascinations, who married my mother through the sheer force of his own will, and not through any especial love on either side. It was a singular and unsuitable marriage, and I was never reconciled to it. Colonel Monk had been previously married in India, and had two children, born in India, whom he brought with him to Chetwynd Park. In the second year of his marriage to my mother Colonel Monk died. As his fortune, an annuity, died with him, his children were but slenderly provided for, and in his last moments Colonel Monk entreated my mother to promise that she would be a mother to them. The promise was readily given. A little over a year ago my mother also died, and bequeathed to me her step-children as a special charge, to be befriended and provided for by me. I gave her my solemn promise that Sylvia should always have a home at Chetwynd Park. They seem like brother and sister to me, and share my home, as I said, as if they possessed a right there equal, or only less than mine."

"How old are they, Roy?"

"Gilbert is two years older than I—five-and-twenty, in fact—and Sylvia—I named my yacht after her—is two-and-twenty. Gilbert has no profession, and depends upon me as a younger brother might depend upon an elder. I believe his chief ambition is to achieve a rich marriage. Sylvia will no doubt contract a brilliant marriage some day, but I hope she will remain with us for many, many years. You will love her at sight. How surprised Gilbert and Sylvia will be when I return to them with my bride! You will sail with me to-morrow, will you not, Bernice?"

"If my parents are willing," the girl answered, softly, her brown face aglow with blushes.

"Let us go to them at once," cried the young lover, all eagerness and impetuosity. "Your father must have seen that I love you, Bernice. I have been at the manse every day since my arrival at this island. I brought him letters from a Scottish minister, Mrs. Gwellan's cousin, and he knows my whole history."

His lordship was eager to put his fate to the test, and the young pair presently set out to descend the crags on their way to the manse.

The manse was a more pretentious dwelling than any other on the island.

It was roomy, comfortable and home-like, with its picturesque thatched roof, the abundant ivy on its outer walls, and its low, quaint porches.

It was set in the midst of an old-fashioned garden, where a few sweet-scented flowers grew.

Bernice led the way up the steps and into the long, low parlour, which, in memory of staterooms, was always called by Mrs. Gwellan the drawing-room.

Mr. Gwellan sat at his desk in a sunny corner of the room, busy with an appeal he was writing to the churches of Scotland in behalf of his own struggling little church.

The old minister was past his sixtieth year, was tall and gaunt, of large and massive frame, with a heavy, rugged face, which bore the stamp of an active kindness and benignity.

His long hair was gray, and he had the look of one of the old Covenanters of Scotland, solemn, steadfast, and self-subsisting, yet as if he knew a peace to which the gray world is a stranger.

His wife, gray also, had a sweet, patient, refined face and a gentleness of manner that indicated her gentle breeding.

She was unmistakably a lady in the truest and highest sense of the word.

The old couple arose with old-fashioned courtesy at the entrance of Lord Chetwynd and Bernice and welcomed the young marquis.

"This is likely to be my last visit at the manse of St. Kilda, for this year, at least," said the marquis, having acknowledged their greetings and accepted a seat upon the wide, easy lounge. "It is time that the 'Sylvia's' sails were set for home. If the wind holds favourable we must sail to-morrow."

"We shall miss you, my lord," said the minister, regretfully, "but you are right; you must go. Your companionship has been very pleasant to us, bringing to us a glimpse of the world of culture and books, and we shall remember you with affection, and our best wishes shall go with you."

"I want more than that, Mr. Gwellan," said the young lord, his fair face flushing. "I have come here to-day to tell you that I love your daughter, and to ask her hand in marriage."

The old couple started.

"I had not foreseen this," said the minister, gravely. "We have been blind, my wife and I. We thought Bernice a mere child. She is but sixteen, my lord. It is only within a day or two that Caroline has opened my eyes to the fact of the great change in our darling of late. We had just begun to fear that she loved you, but we did not dream that you loved her. The disparity of rank between you is too great to admit of your happiness."



"There is no such disparity of rank," cried the young lover, hotly. "Bernice looks like a patrician born. She is a lady. The Gwellans are of gentle blood."

"True, my lord," said the old minister, sighing, "and Bernice is as near to us as if she were of our own blood. But she is not a Gwellan. And if you in your love can overlook the mystery of her parentage, your friends would not overlook it. But the time might come, my lord, when, the first glamour of youthful love past, you would reproach yourself and us if we permitted this marriage."

"You do not know me," cried Lord Chetwynd. "My love is not the light summer sentiment you deem it. I love Bernice with all my heart and soul. Whatever her parentage, she is herself worthy any position, and a marriage with me cannot exalt her. I entreat you to give her to me."

The old minister hesitated and turned to his wife. The youthful ardour of Lord Chetwynd shook his resolves.

A glance at the girl's pale, eager face and glowing eyes caused him to waver still farther.

"My lord," said the old minister, slowly, "you tempt me almost beyond my powers of resistance. My health is feeble. If I were to die, my wife would go back to her own kindred in Scotland, but they are too poor to give Bernice also a home. She is ignorant of the world. What would become of her? She could not be left here among these islanders. And I am likely to die at any time," he added, putting his hand to his side as if to still a sudden pain. "What shall we say, Caroline? Can we give up the child to Lord Chetwynd?"

The two eager young faces turned pleadingly to Mrs. Gwellan.

She yielded to the mute prayer, and assented to the minister's question.

"One word then, Lord Chetwynd," said Mr. Gwellan; "before this matter is decided let me tell you all we know about our dear child. She is not of our blood. We do not know who she is nor whence she came. We believe her to be of English birth, but beyond that we know nothing about her. We have lived on this island some twenty years. Fourteen years ago—it was October then as now—an English yacht, much like yours, put into our bay at nightfall. She sailed at daybreak. We never knew her name. The night was dark and misty. A boat put off from the yacht, bringing ashore a gentleman with a sleeping child, a mere baby of two years, in his arms. He found his way to the manse, and demanded a private interview with me. He told me that the little child was an orphan, and he desired to leave it in the care of my wife and myself. He desired us to bring her up as our own child. He said that she was of gentle birth, and must be educated carefully, thoroughly. He said that he would return and reclaim her within five years, and he left a large sum of money for her support. He called, as I said, at dawn. The five years passed and he did not come. Other years went by, and now fourteen are passed, and we have never heard of or from him. He gave the name of South, but we think that may have been an assumed name."

"Did you think him the father of the child?"

"Yes—and no. He said she was an orphan, but he embraced her when he went away, straining her little form to him in a sort of anguish and despair. He was evidently a gentleman, but one who had known some terrible sorrow that had wrecked his life."

"Why did he never return to claim his child?"

"We think he must have died before the time he had appointed for his return," said Mr. Gwellan. "He never came, never sent any message; surely he must have died. We have brought Bernice up, as he directed, as our own child. The mystery of her parentage will probably remain a mystery all ways. Who Bernice really is she will not know, nor shall we know, in all probability, until we arrive in that world where all secrets are unveiled."

"Whatever the mystery be, I agree with you, sir, that it will probably never be cleared in this world, and that the mysterious stranger who brought Bernice to St. Kilda is without doubt dead. Did he call the child Bernice, or did you give her the name?"

"He called her Bernice South, but desired me to give her my own surname, which I did, having a conviction that he had not given me her true name. It may seem strange to you, my lord, that we should have accepted the charge of the child so unhesitatingly. But the little creature was so pale and wan, so shy and sweet and winning, that my poor wife, who mourned our childlessness, took to her at once, and begged to be allowed to keep her. No thought that she might have been stolen ever disturbed us. Something in the appearance of the stranger, Mr. South, would have forbidden even such a suspicion. Bernice has been a sacred charge to us, and our hearts will be sore when she shall have gone. But has not this recital of our girl's history warned you to pause, my lord, in this matter which is to control

your whole future life? Bernice is herself good and noble, and she will have no relatives turning up at inconvenient times to annoy you; but she has no stately name, no long line of ancestry—so far as we know. It is possible even that were her true history known you might shrink from her."

"I suppose it is your duty to tell all this to me, Mr. Gwellan," said the young marquis, impatiently, "but I am no cold-blooded man to consider the dictates of worldly prudence instead of the promptings of my own heart. Bernice is worthy to be a queen. I love her, and I again entreat your consent to our marriage."

"At least, you will wait a year," said the minister, beginning to yield. "Bernice is but a child yet. A year will test your love."

"A year would be an age to me!" cried the marquis. "I want to take Bernice home with me, sir. My home has no mistress save my step-sister, who has lived there since my mother's death the same as before. You know all about me, I have heard you say that you approve of early marriages. Give Bernice to me now, and let me take her away to-morrow."

"I consent to an immediate marriage between you," said the old minister, wearily. "Perhaps it is better so. I may not live another year, and I tremble to think what would become of Bernice if I were gone. I only hope that neither you nor Bernice, my lord, will ever have cause to reproach me that my consent was too readily yielded. Since it is decided, it were well that the marriage should take place without unnecessary delay. Be at the church at eleven in the morning, my lord, and we will also be there."

Lord Chetwynd uttered his ardent gratitude, and soon after took his leave, Bernice following down to the beach with him.

"I hope I am doing right, Caroline," said the old minister, looking after the young pair with a wistful gaze. "Lord Chetwynd loves our girl, and she loves him. Despite the mystery of her identity, and all the possibilities of her birth and relationship, she is worthy even of him. I am right to consent to our darling such a brilliant future, such a happy home, such a loving husband, and yet—and yet—a sudden misgiving comes to me that this marriage may be the beginning of woes to Bernice. How foolish, wife. The misgiving is unworthy of them, of myself. I have passed my word to them, and I shall keep it, but I would to Heaven I could look forward ten years and see if this marriage be happy or miserable."

## CHAPTER II.

THE little church was thrown open as early as nine o'clock, and, the news of the great expected event having already permeated the village, long before ten the scanty population of fowlers and fishers had gathered in the dim aisles and quaint old pews eager to witness the marriage of "Miss Bernice of the manse" to the fair young English lord.

Soon after half-past ten o'clock the impatient young bridegroom entered the church. He was attended by the sailing-master of his yacht, whom he usually termed the skipper, and four sailors.

It was fully eleven o'clock when the Gwellans appeared with the youthful bride.

Bernice clung to Mr. Gwellan's left arm, her face pale, her eyes downcast. Her attire was simplicity itself, consisting of a white muslin gown, which though very dainty was guiltless of trimming; a wide, white sash tied about her waist; and cream-white, house-grown roses knotted at her breast, and nestled in her hair, yet Bernice Gwellan looked a thorough lady, refined, spirited, and sweet, and Lord Chetwynd felt his heart thrill with pride and triumph, and a sudden moisture of joy and rapture obscured the brightness of his blue eyes.

Mr. Gwellan relinquished his adopted daughter to the marquis, and stood at the altar. The young pair took their places before him.

The simple words of the marriage service were spoken, and the island girl who had been called Bernice Gwellan was now Bernice, Marchioness of Chetwynd.

The minister and his wife embraced their darling with tears, but both were conscious of a sense of happiness in the prospect of her brilliant destiny. Yet, strange to say, as Mr. Gwellan bent to kiss her there shot through his heart a hot pain of apprehension, such as he had experienced on the previous evening—a sort of gathering terror, a sudden shrinking and dismay—and for the moment he would have given all his scanty possessions and all his prospects of prolonged existence could the marriage service have been unsaid.

Yet the next moment he smiled at what he deemed his folly, and strove to forget it.

The sailing-master of the yacht tendered his congratulations and best wishes, addressing the bride by her newly acquired title.

The sailors passed before the happy pair, bowing,

and made their way out of the church to the yacht. The islanders then thronged about the bridal group with tears and hearty good wishes. They all loved "Miss Bernice of the manse" even better than they loved gentle Mrs. Gwellan.

It was past twelve o'clock when the bridal party went to the manse. Here a simple and hastily gotten up breakfast was served, many of the islanders being present at it.

Soon after the repast the newly married pair were left alone with the minister and his wife. And then it was that Lord Chetwynd first marked the air of depression that had come upon Mr. Gwellan.

"You are grieving, sir, I see, at the prospect of losing Bernice," said his lordship, with kindly sympathy. "I do not intend to separate her from you entirely. Should you remain at St. Kilda I shall bring Bernice to see you next summer. But why should you remain here, Mr. Gwellan? You can change the field of your labours. Why should you bury your talents in this forgotten nook? I will obtain a living for you in England, where your talents will be appreciated. I have in my own gift four livings, all of them of considerable importance. One of these livings, near my own seat of Chetwynd Park, will probably become vacant this year, the present incumbent being very old and infirm. When this vacancy occurs may I not look to you to fill it?"

Mr. Gwellan smiled sadly, yet gratefully.

"I cannot give up my work here, my lord," he said, "until I am called to my eternal rest. Our lives are interwoven with those of our people. I think I shall like to die here, and to be buried within the sound of the waves that beat on these rocks. But I trust you will come with Bernice to Saint Kilda next year to visit us, and we may even visit you at Chetwynd Park in due time."

The hours of that last afternoon wore away all too quickly.

The old minister and his wife had loving counsels to give, and Bernice wandered about the manse, bidding adieu to the home that had sheltered her all her life, and gathering up the few books and effects which she was to take with her to England.

Late in the afternoon the bridal pair, attended by Mr. and Mrs. Gwellan, went aboard. They were received with ringing cheers from the sailors. The rain was still falling steadily and drearily, and the little party, with a shiver of discomfort, hastened below.

A delicate collation was served in the cabin, which was lighted up brilliantly, and the young marquis presided with lordly grace.

The feast was prolonged as far as possible, but as the shadows of evening began to press more heavily down upon the skylight, and the dreary rain made louder murmur, and the waves moaned along the coast, the Gwellans stood to take their leave.

The adieux were not easily spoken.

Bernice had been the light and joy of the lives of her foster-parents, and they had been all the world to her before the arrival of the young Saxon lord two months before. The parting was very sad, but it was over at last.

Bernice flung herself sobbing upon a divan, and Lord Chetwynd escorted the old couple to the deck, to the waiting boat, and even to the shore.

"Be good to our child," said the minister, in a choking voice, wringing his lordship's hand. "May Heaven deal with you as you deal with her, my lord!"

A moment more and Lord Chetwynd leaped into the boat and was rowed back to the yacht and his waiting bride.

The old minister and his wife stood on the dark and stormy beach and watched the dim outlines of the vessel with weeping eyes until the yacht was lost from her moorings and moving slowly out to sea.

"It is hard to let her go," sobbed Mrs. Gwellan, clinging to her husband's arm, "but we are old, David, and it is best. Whatever happens to our darling is provided for."

"But how?" asked the minister, huskily. "My mind misgives me, Caroline. An awful foreboding that I have felt twice before comes to me. She is but young. The marquis is good and noble, but the world is full of evil. But from whatever source trouble may come to her I know in my soul at this moment that she is to have trouble—dark, bitter, and sore. If I had but been wiser! But my prevision comes too late. We cannot save her. There she goes, Caroline—goes to her fate."

The dim outlines of the yacht faded into the wet gloom. But suddenly a rocket, and then another and another went up from the vessel's deck, and in the lurid glare the old couple beheld the spectral-looking yacht, standing out toward the Atlantic, and upon her deck close together stood the bridal pair.

A little later and the yacht had disappeared from these wistful, watching eyes, and Bernice, Marchioness of Chetwynd, had vanished.

(To be continued.)



[LODGINGS TO LET.]

## A VERITABLE HISTORY.

"Ah, well, this is a wearisome way of passing one's life," sighed Rose Edgerton as she trifled with some embroidery on which she had been working. "One gets tired of the same round of parties and pleasuring in the winter, and going to the sea-side in the summer. And there seems no help for it, which is a bad feature in the case. Mrs. Grundy's behests must be obeyed, and she has decided that it is plebeian to employ one's self in any useful manner. I sometimes wish I were obliged to earn my living as many a one does who has been as tenderly brought up as I have been."

"What do you suppose you would gain by that?" Rose looked up at the speaker who entered the room at that moment, and perhaps deserves more than a passing notice.

Hannah Bailey was Mrs. Edgerton's cousin, and was when introduced to the reader visiting Rose. She was very short and stout, and of a happy and cheerful disposition.

She lived in a small town in Sussex, and was in her younger days a tailoress. In later years she went out working for the neighbours, sewing or mending. She was universally respected, and went by the name of Aunt Hannah among her numerous friends and patrons.

At the time my story opens she had been staying with Rose for nearly two weeks.

Rose sat looking thoughtfully at the old lady for a few moments.

"Why do you want to work for a living?" repeated her aunt.

"Because," said Rose, "I should then have an aim in life. Of what use am I now to any one?"

"No doubt your friends enjoy your presence and companionship."

"But I am not happy. Really, Aunt Hannah, I don't think I am nearly so happy as you are."

"Then why not come home with me, and try earning your living as I do, for a while?" said the old lady, gaily.

"Will you let me come?"

"Of course I will. I live all alone, and you would be company for me."

"But what shall I do with the house?"

"Discharge the servants and let the house. You can let it for a few months, till you have tried the new plan. You'll be ready enough to come back again."

"You needn't be too sure of that, Aunt Hannah. I may like the country so well that I shall decide to remain there."

"Oh, well, we shall see—time will show."

"I wonder how I can arrange about letting the house," said Rose.

"Can't you put a card marked 'To be Let' in the window?"

"Oh, no," said her companion, "I would not like to do that. But I can advertise in one of the daily papers," she added.

The next morning's papers contained the following notice:

"To be Let—a Furnished House in a desirable situation. Apply between the hours of nine and eleven a.m., etc."

"There," said Rose as she read the advertisement, "I think that will do. I wonder who will be my first applicant."

Scarcely had she uttered the words before the bell rang and a sharp-featured woman entered.

"Is this house to be let, ma'am?" asked she of Rose.

"It is," was the reply.

"It looks pleasant," said the visitor. "Can I go over it?"

"Yes," said Rose, "provided everything else is satisfactory. How large a family have you?"

"I've got seventeen, ma'am. I keep a boarding-

house. I haven't room where I am, so I concluded it would be better for me to move."

"Then you wanted this for a boarding-house, did you?"

"Yes, that's what I wanted of it."

"It will not be let for any such purpose. Indeed, I am very particular who has it. If no suitable person applies, the house will be closed for the next few months."

"What a shame that would be when I should like it so much, and my boarders are of the gentlest kind."

At that moment the door opened and a gentleman was announced.

The other applicant turned to leave the room, saying as she did so:

"If you should change your mind, ma'am, and conclude to let me have the house, just drop me a line to my address on this card and I'll call and see you again about it."

Rose bowed, and the woman left the room.

Rose then admitted the gentleman, who immediately began gazing about the room.

"It seems very comfortable and pleasant here," said he.

"You came to make inquiries about the house?" said she, interrogatively.

"Yes," said he, suavely, and he came towards her.

"I, also, have a proposition to make to you which I hope may not prove disagreeable. I learned from a friend that you were about to give up this house on account of your loneliness. Now, I am a gentleman of wealth, and am also alone. Can we not join our destinies, and still remain here? Though you do not know me, I have long admired and loved you. Do not disdain my love, but give a favourable reply to my suit, I pray you," and he knelt in a supplicating attitude before her.

"Sir," said Rose, with dignity, "what means this unwarrantable intrusion? I do not know you, neither am I willing to listen to such a ridiculous proposition. The very idea is absurd. Rise, sir; you have my answer."

"It's just as I expected," said a voice from the door.

Rose looked round astonished, and the gentleman, with a thoroughly frightened air, looked vainly around the room for another means of exit.

"Mr. Blodgett," exclaimed the angry female at the door, "ain't you ashamed, coming here and making such an exhibition of yourself?"

Mr. Blodgett looked crestfallen enough, but made no reply. Rose looked towards the speaker inquiringly.

"This man is my husband, miss," said she. "About a year ago he came to board with me. He was there two months, and never said a word about paying me, and when I presented my bill he offered to marry me, and I, thinking he might be of some use in helping take care of the children—I have seven, ma'am, little angels, all of them—took pity on him, and married him. But I have to keep a strict watch over him. This morning I knew he had some plan in his head, for he spent an hour before the glass, dressing himself. So I just followed him. You'd better come home with me, Herbert," said she, turning towards him. "You'll never find anybody that'll treat you better."

Mr. Blodgett walked humbly away with his wife, who nodded to him with an air of conscious superiority, saying:

"Even if you'd been at liberty to make the offer, Miss Edgerton has refused it, so there's no use in staying any longer."

The pair had hardly left the house before Mr. and Mrs. Goodman called. They were acquaintances of Rose, and came in gaily chatting.

"I daresay we are too late," said Mr. Goodman, "but Anna would wait to arrange every bow in the most precise manner. Have you had any applicants for your house yet?"

"Yes," said Rose, smiling, "but no successful ones. Why, would you like it?"

"Yes," said Anna; "Edwin and I are tired of apartments, but as we may not like keeping house as well as we anticipate we thought we would take a furnished house and try it for a few months. So when we saw the advertisement in the papers this morning we both thought it just the thing, and hastened to secure it."

"You can have the house for four months at least, and perhaps longer, and I consider myself fortunate in getting such acceptable occupants."

The terms and other matters, of no importance to our readers, were soon agreed upon and the young couple took their leave.

A week later Aunt Hannah and Rose were on their way to Sussex.

"There's one thing, Rose," said her companion, "that I'm afraid you won't like, and that is the ride for the last seven miles. We shall have to ride in an old-fashioned stage-coach."



"So much the better," said Rose. "That will give us variety. If it were in the winter when the roads were frozen we might not enjoy it so much. But I have started with the determination to like everything. I really think I feel happier than I have been for a long time."

"I'm glad of it, and hope it will last after the novelty has worn off."

"I am sure it will," said Rose. "This is the most pleasant time of the year to go into the country—in spring. But there is one thing I must caution you against. Be sure not to allow any one to know that I have any property. It would take away a good deal of my pleasure."

"I shall remember," said Aunt Hannah. "I like a good joke myself, and I'll help you carry out your plan."

They had just arrived at the station when the old lady said, addressing a fine-looking young man:

"How do you do, Stephen?"

"Is that you, Aunt Hannah? I'm glad to see you—even more so than usual, for I am in trouble, and perhaps you can help me out of it."

"What is it? I'll promise in advance to help you, if possible."

"My housekeeper has left me. I have just brought her to the station. Her sister has died and left several children, and Mrs. Brigham felt obliged to go and take care of them. Now the question is, can you take her place and come and keep house for me?"

"Well," said Aunt Hannah, emphatically, "I'll tell you just how it is. But first I must introduce you. This is my niece—Miss Lee, Mr. Atherton."

The young man bowed.

"Rose, you see, has come home to work with me this summer. Now if I come to keep house for you what shall I do with her?"

"Let her come with you, by all means," said he, at once. "And, if she is willing to assist you, all the better, as you will need help."

"What do you say, Rose?" asked the old lady.

"I think we shall feel well pleased with the situation, Aunt Hannah, and you may depend on me to help you all I can. I'm pretty easy to learn."

"Oh, yes, you'll be handy, I know."

"Well, Stephen," said she, turning to the young man, "we've decided to accept your offer."

"I'm so glad, and thank you very heartily. You don't know how much relieved I feel. It's just the busiest time in the year, and I hardly knew where to look for help. Besides, I should rather not have a stranger."

"The stage is ready to leave, isn't it?" asked Rose.

"Yes, but we are not going in that way. My phaeton is on the other side of the station."

He led the way to the vehicle, which was a very nice-looking one, drawn by a large gray horse.

He assisted them into it, and they were soon on their way homeward.

The farmhouse was a curious structure. Originally it was a cottage containing four rooms, a parlour or sitting-room on either side of the front hall, with bedrooms above, and a kitchen at the back. But after a time a kitchen and back room were built beyond, and the former kitchen was used as a dining-room. Then two bedrooms were built, opening from the dining-room, one on each side, and, finally, the year before Stephen bought the place, there was connected with the house a large and airy shed, with a loft over it, which the former proprietor had used as a general store-room.

Stephen went out to unharness the horse, and Aunt Hannah said, smiling:

"This is a different ending to our journey from what I expected when I left London."

"Yes, it is really quite romantic. But who is the young man? He doesn't look like a farmer."

"Well, he is one and a good one too. He bought this place about three years ago. It belonged to Farmer Ames. He built it, as one might say, room by room."

"But why did he have bedrooms downstairs?"

"Oh, in case of illness, it was thought to be convenient, I suppose."

At that moment Stephen came in.

"You will not be obliged to do much for a day or two, and will have time to rest from your journey," said he, "as Mrs. Brigham cooked enough to last for several days, for she didn't know how soon I should find some one to be her successor. I consider myself very fortunate in filling her place so soon, and so well."

"How did you happen to become a farmer?" asked Rose.

"I always had a taste for a farmer's life," said he. "I remember when I was a boy at Mr. Alden's boarding-school I begged a piece of land to cultivate, for a little garden. I grew some famous cabbages and beans in it. When I left school my father wished me to follow his occupation, which was that of a civil engineer, but I still clung to my boyish predilection."

and as this farm was for sale my father bought it for me. I have never yet repented of my choice."

"But isn't it rather dreary in the country in the winter?"

"I do not consider it so. The winter is a farmer's holiday, and if one has plenty of books and papers to read, nice fires to keep the house comfortable, and a horse at command whenever one wishes to drive out, it seems anything but dreary. I think if you were to pass one winter here, you would decide that it was more gay and cheerful than you imagine."

"You have meetings of the Farmers' Club and occasional lectures besides in the Town Hall," said Aunt Hannah.

"Yes," replied Stephen, "but I think Miss Lee would not enjoy such things."

"I should enjoy them very much I assure you," said she.

"I think," said Aunt Hannah, "that it is time to get tea now, and we'd better all adjourn to the kitchen. Stephen can tell us where the different things are to be found. Rose can set the table, and I will prepare the food."

The days passed very pleasantly to both Aunt Hannah and Rose, and neither realized that time was passing so rapidly till September came.

Under Aunt Hannah's tuition Rose had learned many housewifery arts.

She had assisted in canning fruit, drying apples, and making preserves. She could make the sweetest golden butter—and cheese which would tempt an epicure. She often went out and helped rake hay when a shower was impending, and was always rewarded by a ride to the barn on the fragrant load.

One day early in September Aunt Hannah said to her:

"I've been looking over the comforters to-day, and they need mending up and getting ready for winter."

"I'm ready to help you at any time," said Rose. "But isn't that a curious name for them? It must have been some lone bachelor or maiden who first applied it."

"I don't know about that, but in cold nights they are real comforters."

"When are you going to make up that quilt you were speaking about for Mr. Atherton's bed?"

"I spoke to Stephen the other day about it, and he said by all means let us send out invitations and have a quilting party, for he thought you would enjoy it. So it's all arranged. We are to have it next Thursday afternoon. Washing and ironing will be out of the way, and we can bake on Wednesday and Thursday morning too if we need."

Rose sat for a moment, gazing thoughtfully out of the window. At length she spoke.

"Aunt Hannah, I must go home soon."

The old lady looked up quickly.

"Go home, Rose?" exclaimed she. "What made you think of that?"

"Oh, well," said she, evasively, "I ought to go. I've been here longer than I expected when I came. Besides, I had a letter from Mrs. Goodman yesterday. Mr. Goodman has bought a house near mine, and they will move into it soon."

"But what will Stephen say?"

"I don't know. But then of course that should make no difference."

"Well, Rose, promise me one thing. Don't say anything about it till after the quilting party. He thinks that you will enjoy it, and it would take away all his pleasure if he thought you were going to leave soon."

"Well, I'll make that promise," said Rose as she left the room.

"It's my opinion," said the old lady, "that things will come to a point before that. It's easy enough to see that Stephen thinks the world of Rose, and I don't believe she's indifferent to him. But it's best to let things take their course."

The evening before the quilting party came. Loaves and cakes without number had been made, and every variety of pie that one could think of had been baked.

"Where is the quilting to be done?" asked Rose.

"In the dining-room," said Aunt Hannah. "That seems to be the largest place."

"But where are we to have supper, then?" asked Rose, in surprise.

"You must ask Stephen," said the old lady.

"Where is it to be, Mr. Atherton? I feel as curious about it as a child."

"We shall be obliged to go to London for that," said he, in a sober tone.

"Is that really so? Won't it be nice?"

"Stephen has made a long table that extends the whole length of the room," said Aunt Hannah. "I put the cloth and most of the dishes on while you were away last night. We meant it for a surprise to you."

"Well, it is a surprise, I'm sure."

"Let's go and see it," said Stephen.

"So we will," said Rose. "Come, Aunt Hannah."

"I'll come directly," said the old lady; but on second thought she wisely decided to remain away.

As Aunt Hannah had said, the table extended nearly the whole length of the side.

"How nice it is," said Rose. "But where did you get all these old things? You've got as many as most people that have kept house for fifty years."

"When we took the place," said she, "we bought everything that was in it. Old Mr. Ames and his wife had lately died and none of the children wanted such old things. But I value them more than I should if the furniture were all new. Besides," he added, "it always seemed more like home to me to have an attic full of extras in case of an emergency. Now," said he, "if I were going to be married, for instance, and there were not chairs enough for the guests, we could easily make these do."

"Well, all I have to say is, don't offer one of them to me on that occasion," said she, gaily. "I wouldn't trust myself on one."

"I'll agree not to do so," he replied, "and test you might by any means be obliged to sit in one of them I hereby invite you to a seat on the sofa by my side on that important occasion."

She looked up quickly, and met his gaze fixed with loving earnestness upon her face.

Her eyes fell at once, and her cheeks were suffused with crimson.

"You haven't answered me," said he as he gently drew her toward him.

"I don't know that I quite understand you."

"When I marry I want you to be my wife, Rose. Will you consent?"

The reply was entirely satisfactory.

It is not necessary to detail the rest of the conversation.

Those of our readers who are married can readily imagine it, and those who are not we hope will soon know it by pleasant experience.

As the sound of voices became low and confidential Aunt Hannah nodded to herself over the stocking she was knitting, and murmured:

"It's just as well I didn't go."

The ladies invited to the party came early and worked so diligently that they completed the quilt before supper.

Then the gentlemen came, and in the evening games peculiar to country parties were played. The scene was a novel one to Rose, and she entered into the spirit of it with a good deal of zest.

After the guests had all departed, and Aunt Hannah was engaged in putting away the remains of the feast, Rose said to Stephen:

"There is one thing I forgot to mention when we were talking last night about—"

She hesitated, blushing.

"About our marriage," said he, smiling. "What terrible thing could it be?"

"It is a condition," she replied.

"Worse and worse," he said. "But do not keep me in suspense longer."

"Then I will confess all, at once—I am not poor, as you supposed, but have some property, and own a house in London. I became tired of being a useless member of society, and came to work with Aunt Hannah as a change. Now the condition that I impose is that after we are married you agree to live for a month or two in London during the winter, and enjoy the advantages of lectures, concerts and so on, which we are unable to have here."

"I am astonished to find that I am pledged to marry an heiress—a thing I have always declared I never would do. Still I accept the decrees of fate and agree to your condition, and now impose one in return."

"That is?"

"That we be married on the twenty-eighth of November."

"That is so soon."

"Certainly, and it will be all the more appropriate for that. Of all the blessings for which one is expected to be thankful this is the crowning one, and I trust and believe that our whole lives will be a perpetual thanksgiving."

O. A. C.

A SINGULAR CIRCUMSTANCE.—A Paris journal relates that a wedding party assembled in a restaurant the other evening, were suddenly put to rout in a strange manner. The room being warm the window was opened, and the bride approached it to breathe the air. A gust of wind at that moment detached from the front of a toyshop, where it had been hanging, a figure, in the likeness of a red and horned demon, made of gold-beater's skin. This figure the bride saw approaching her from the darkness, and her terror communicated itself to the other guests, who no sooner beheld what they believed to be a supernatural visitant than they fled in tropic-

dation. The master of the restaurant at length had the boldness to enter the room, when he discerned the figure still capering about, and in the act of making its way to the window again. He recognized his neighbour's sign.

## GLIMPSES OF SOCIETY.

### CHAPTER XXVII.

OUT by the private exit, careless and helter, dashed the tall policeman, out into the street, along which he sped swiftly.

Presently he drew breath, for he had looked back several times and had not seen a sign of pursuit. The jewels were yet his.

But he knew, too, that he had been discovered and his arrest anticipated by the best detective in the force, and that he could not be safe anywhere in London long.

He must leave, and that in a disguise which could not be penetrated; for well he knew that his own description would precede him everywhere, now that B. had the case in hand.

Suddenly he thought of an old woman whom he had favoured in a petty larceny case, who had a beer shop close at hand. She would hide him and buy a disguise, and in it he could get away. He would not tell her why he wished to go, or of his riches, but would be off before she could learn it even by accident.

He went in, and passed hurriedly through the little bar into a close back room, where he found the old woman herself.

"Lal sakes, if it isn't that policeman!" she cried, in amazement, mingled with alarm. "You're not after me, are you? You ain't in unicorn, any way!"

"No, no; I'm not after you. But I'm after a fellow on the sly, and he got away from me just now because he knew me in this rig. Now I want a fresh disguise—something no one will know me in, and if you'll help me to it and keep mum I'll pay you well."

"Well, you saved me once, you did, and old Bet hasn't forgot it."

"So I did. Get me some clothes, and I'll see how I look with them on."

"Help yourself, then—help yourself!" said the woman, opening a chest in the corner of the room, and tossing him an armful of old coats, pants, and vests.

He soon selected a suit, one rather ragged too, and in a little while he was fully clad.

"How do I look now?" he asked.

"Why, bless my soul, man, you look jest like my old man that's dead and gone these six year. I could almost kiss you for him."

"You needn't do that—but now I'll pay you for your clothes and go. Get me a drink of water while I take the change out of my other pockets."

This ruse, to get her out of the way while he transferred the jewels, unseen, to the pockets he had on, succeeded.

It was done, and he had a five-pound note ready for her before she got back.

"Here's the water, master. I can get something stronger upstairs, if you like."

"No, this will do, and there is a five-pound note for your clothes."

"Five pounds is a heap of money for this old child to make. However, I'll take it and thank you too. I don't wish nobody no harm, but I hope you'll get your man."

"I'll do that, never fear," said he. "When I'm on a track I always stick till I get my game. That's me."

"And me too," cried a shrill voice in the doorway.

"And me too!" growled another voice, and Peter Bellamy loomed up alongside of Ragged Dick also in the only doorway.

For an instant he was dumb with surprise and terror.

The old woman spoke first:

"Who is these? Are they friends of yours?"

"Yes—they're friends of mine. Go out in the bar, please, and leave us a bit to talk over some business matter. We must be alone."

The old woman nodded her head and went out, while Peter Bellamy and Ragged Dick came in, closing the door behind them.

"You're sensible, you are, to be willin' to talk, when with a word we'd have old B., the detective, on top of ye," said Peter as he sat down with his back to the door.

"B. will be after you as well as me. We are all three in one scrape now," said the policeman, bitterly.

"It's partly true what you're saying," said Peter, "but one of us can equal and get part of the reward, any way. An' if any one does it, 'twill be me. Put that in your pipe, Mr. — What shall I call ye now?"

"Call me Jake, but listen to reason," said the man.

"Well, Jake, speak reason, and let me hear what it sounds like."

"I've got the jewels, and I'm willing to share; but they know of 'em now at the head-quarters—there's descriptions of 'em now in every pawn-shop afore this, and no fence will dare take 'em and give us a half a sight for the face of 'em. We've got to slide away from here if we use 'em at all."

"But where?"

"I'm thinkin' of shippin' as fireman for a forin' port."

"Not here. Me and the kid won't leave this Paradise yet. There's too good pickin' for highland for low!"

"Then what can we do?"

"I'll tell ye. I'll tell ye. I've a pal, one Jimmy Growhogan, who owns a sloop on the river. He's in to-night, for I saw him going eastward 'only a little bit ago, like he was going aboard. He lives on the swag he picks up rannin' up an' down the river, and he makes lots by it. I s'pose we'll go aboard an' stay with him till we can get cash for the sparklers, and divide?"

"I'm agreed," said the policeman.

"Me, too; and then we can get the little curly-head, and keep her till they pay us a thousand for her!"

cried Ragged Dick.

"Who—little Nell? Do you know where she is?"

asked Bellamy.

"Bet yer life I do! She's not very far off, in a grand crib full o' nice things."

"Then we'll crack the crib, get her, and make a swag beside," said Peter.

"You'd better both dress up like me, and then we can let B. and every other detective pass right under our noses," said the policeman.

"That's so," cried Peter. "We'll dress up, Dick, and put on other togs, and we'll have our own fun with the cops!"

To execute the idea took but little more time than its conception.

The old woman was called in, and an extra five pounds given to her, and she soon had Bellamy and Ragged Dick in as good disguise as her first visitor.

### CHAPTER XXVIII.

MR. MORRIS laid the paper on the table, took up a pen, and in a free, bold hand wrote down his honoured name.

Mr. Evaris followed him.

Then without hesitation Mr. Talmage placed his well-known signature to the document.

Then, with a fond and tender look at the husband who sat by her side, sweet Anna Zane rose and placed her name to the paper.

Edward Zane sat and trembled, yet irresolute.

"My Edward—my own true love, my husband!" whispered the angel woman as she went back to his side and laid her white hand on his arm. "Will you not sign it for me?"

"How can I keep it?" he groaned, at last. "How can I keep it?"

"Sign—pray to Heaven for help, and avoid all temptation!" said Mr. Talmage, solemnly.

"Sign—remember that your truth and honour are pledged, and Heaven will help you to keep it!" said Mr. Morris.

"Sign, and remember how near to ruin's verge drink has already led you; think of her whose young life depends upon your truth, your kindness, and your love, and you will not fall!" said Mr. Evaris, kindly, yet solemnly.

He rose, took Edward by the hand, and in a low whisper said:

"Anna does not know what fearful peril I reaped you from. Oh, for her sake sign, so that you may avoid such peril hereafter."

Touched to the very heart's core by this forbearance, Edward Zane would have been less than man had he held out longer.

With a trembling hand he wrote his name beneath the pledge.

"Heaven be praised!" shouted Mary from the doorway, where she had stood for some time an unobserved witness.

And, forgetful of place and everything but her joy, she rushed forward and said:

"I can't sign my name, but if you'll only let me make my mark there I'll keep the pledge like it was an oath on the sacred cross!"

"I will write your name, my faithful, good girl!" said Mrs. Zane, and I am proud to have even your mark there."

The name was written; the mark made, and then, at the request of Mr. Morris, all knelt while he offered up a fervent prayer of thankfulness.

"We're dished, count, regularly dished!" cried

Barnabas Bludge as Volchini entered the parlour of

their club-room three days after the events occurred which have just been narrated.

"Dished, my dear fellow, is an expression which belongs to that vulgar class of people who cook and wait at tables. I do not understand it!"

"Oh, thunder. When will you cease this affectation and talk right out like a man?"

"When Barnabas Bludge becomes a disciple of honesty. But what is the annoyance now?"

"Ned Zane has taken the temperance pledge!"

"I expected as much. But it is as easy to break as to take it."

"Not in all cases. He has been ill, indoors these three days."

"I expected that, also, and have been seeing to his yacht, and getting things in readiness there for him. He'll find a good lot of wines and liquors on board when he gets there to help him in his temperance reform."

"I don't believe he'll go on board at all. His pretty wife has got him under her thumb again."

"If Stella sees him for just ten minutes he'll be under her whole hand!"

"I don't it. Old Evaris watches the house as a cat watches a mouse hole."

"So much the better. He'll keep no look-out elsewhere. We must, however, lay a plan to get that detective, Siskey, off an imaginary job that will seem to pay largely. We'll get Basswood Ben to do that for us. He is in with us and can manage it."

"Well—what next?"

"We must get Zane here, or somewhere away from his house the moment he is better."

"He is better now—I had his doctor 'interviewed.' I tried to bribe the servant girl to let me see him, but got a rather sharp rebuke—a right-handed compliment on my cheek."

"Ah!"

"Yes, and old Evaris saw it. He laughed as if he would split. But I'll be even with him yet. How about your music-girl?"

"She will not see me. But she receives my notes and bouquets. I'll bring her to terms yet. But I am in no great hurry. To get funds we must have Ned Zane in our power again. That is the first thing. Stella must see him; I have a thought—yes, she can see him, right in the presence of his wife, if my plan succeeds."

"What is it?"

"You know there is a doctor who advertizes that he can give a medicine which will cause such a loathing for drink that one who takes it will turn in her room from anything in the shape of liquor."

"Yes—but I believe he is a humbug."

"So do I. No matter—he is advertized, and all who advertise are read. Stella can personate the doctor."

"Bahaw—she is a woman, and young and handsome."

"Then she can go as the doctor's wife, sent to aid in a good cause by some temperance people."

"That may do. But it may fail. If in any way he could be induced to leave his house without company for an hour, then we might get him in hand again."

"I have it! I have it!"

The count rubbed his hands gleefully together in an excited manner.

"What is your plan?" asked Hudge.

"Stella shall write him a pathetic note, announcing her intention to commit suicide, and craving pardon of him and his good wife. She will say it was madness, but from the first moment she saw she loved him. She cannot help it now, but she can die. In her remorse and sorrow she has but one comfort—she may have been loved by him a little, even if for a few hours. She restores all the jewels he gave her, except those which were stolen, and with her last breath will pray for his welfare."

"You don't mean that she really will give him back those elegant diamonds?"

"I do—but, of course, she will get them and more too from him, for he will fly to see and save the woman who loves him from self-destruction. Then will come our chance. When he reaches her side she will be in the throes of agony. Our physician will be there. He has an antidote for the poison, but she will not take it. Ned Zane will implore her to do so. He cannot bear that she should die on his account. She will refuse, until at a hint from the doctor he offers to take half the dose. To this, to prove her love, although she does not want to live—she consents. That antidote will be fourth-proof brandy, cunningly softened and tintured to taste like medicine. His pledge will be broken—his appetite will come back, he will drink, and he is ours again. For we will keep him under the influence, we will take him off to the yacht, with Stella on board, and we'll go where neither father-in-law nor wife can find him till we are ready to shoot! Now what do you think of my plan?"



"It is glorious. It is a neck ahead of anything I could think of."

"In advance, my dear fellow—in advance, please. The term 'a-head' puts me in mind of horse-racing, the butcher shop, or the barber's chair—all vulgar, very!"

"How soon will you set your plan in action?"

"The moment we can get Stoker out of the way. He is so keen that he might put old Everts on his guard. We must give out that we have left London, and then come back disguised at night. Stella's house must be kept closed, and she remain unseen."

"All that is easy. Where are you going now?"

"To send a bouquet to Georgine. I have not failed to send one with a note of penitence every day since I learned the old idiot Everts took her back to her lodgings. I've got servants, landlady and all in my pay there, and if I can't get her by fair means when I am ready to take her I will by others. I have vowed she shall be mine and she shall be! She is safe where she is till I am ready for her, and so I take the matter coolly!"

"You're a cool one any way, count."

"Generally, my dear fellow, generally. But when a mad woman has a revolver at my head I am a little agitated, for it might go off by accident, you know!"

"Yes, I have heard of such accidents done on purpose! But what shall I do now?"

"Go and send 'Basewood-Ben' to me. We will arrange the Stoker business first. Then I will go and see Stella and get her at work. At labour I mean—work is decidedly vulgar. I mingle so much with the common herd that I unconsciously acquire vulgar expressions."

"What a pity, count—what a pity!"

"I do not heed your sarcasm, but I feel agitated for your ignorance, my dear fellow. Proceed now to perform the duties before you."

Barnabas went to the side-board, as he said, to "prime up for action."

The primer was a tumbler, the ammunition brandy.

## FAETIAE.

"No man," once said Sir Benjamin Budyard, "is bound to be rich or great—no, nor to be wise." Of course not, Sir Benjamin, but some are bound in calf.

A PERPLEXED German tailor, who had made a garment for a youth, and found himself unable to dispose of the surplus fulness which appeared when trying it on, declaring vociferously that "De coat is goot. Is no fault of de coat—de poy is too slim."

DICKENS'S SKULL.—An enterprising phrenologist once wrote a note to the late Charles Dickens, asking permission to make an examination of his cranium. Dickens replied:—"Dear Sir,—At this time I require the use of my skull, but as soon as it shall be at leisure I will willingly place it at your disposal."

A HOLLOW PROCEEDING.—Beecher says, "The devil does not trap us twice alike. If yesterday he comes through vanity to-day he will come through pride. If to-day he comes through one side to-morrow he will come on another. And we are always watching the hole through which he came in last, while he is coming in at another. We are guarding an empty hole while he is digging a new one." Nothing could be more hollow than such a proceeding, Beecher.

## MEMS FOR MANIAE.

JANUARY, the first month of the year, took its name from Janus. We don't know what Janus did without his name afterwards.

Gardening Operations.—The bulbs appear this month. Book your seats early. Protect your tulip beds; sit up with them all night and keep your blunderbuss loaded. Examine the roots of your dahlias; never mind if you offend them, it's for their good. If you keep a boarding-house, attend to your boards.

Angler's Guide.—Roach, pike and chub take the bait this month. Get your worm ready and visit the fountains in Trafalgar Square at midnight.

FEBRUARY.—February used to come before January. This, however, has since been set straight, to avoid confusion.

Gardening Operations.—Begin to get your annuals ready for next year. Give out your snowstorm stories to be written at Midsummer. Pot off well-rooted cuttings of calceolarius. This is good rifle practice. Sew cabbages, but take care that your thread is strong enough.

Angler's Guide.—You may catch a good cold this month if you try hard enough.

MARCH.—March used to be called the spring month. In leap year, however, the name is more properly applied to February.

Gardening Operations.—Keep your beds as tidy as you can. Bake and water them carefully.

If this won't do, consult an experienced bed-maker. You may nail wall fruit this month if no one is looking.

Angler's Guide.—Gudgeons are occasionally silly enough to let you catch them this month.

APRIL.—There is a Fool moon this month. Let us say on the 12th day, 9h. 51m. p.m., but you may fix any other time, if you like it better.

Gardening Operations.—Weed your walks and throw weeds over next-door neighbour's wall. Sow climbers, and sit down and watch them: this requires patience. Plant a biennial and give him the slip: this is an awful lark and well repays the trouble.

Angler's Guide.—Heels come in this month. Ask about them at Pattison's. Brass-tipped ones are very nice under a quilted satin petticoat.

MAY.—Lads and lasses in the olden times used to repair to the woodlands at the dawn of May morning, to gather May on other people's property. Many of them having got into trouble this fine old practice has subsided.

Gardening Operations.—You should remove bulbs this month: remove those belonging to the people next door if you can. This is a good time for hoeing, where you can get any tick. Plant tomatoes, and see they turn their toes out.

Angler's Guide.—Go fly-fishing for whitebait if you really like sport; if not, drop down to Gravesend, and try Mr. Skilleter's red and black devils.

JUNE.—June is the sixth month of the year, according to the common reckoning. If you don't want to be common, reckon it the fifth.

Angler's Guide.—June is a bad month for the angler, but pawnbrokers ought to do well, for most of the fish (s)pawn.—Judy Almanack, 1873.

## THE POET'S DUTY.

SAY! what's the poet's duty?

And what the poet's joy?

To raise man's sense of beauty,

And evil to destroy!

To scan with eye perceptive

Sweet Nature's varied face;

And 'gainst all arts deceptive

Deep lines of worth to trace!

To see in every turning

A lesson for the day—

And with a holy yearning

Purge vile abuse away—

To cheer the soul with measures,

Make light the load we bear;

That hope in coming pleasures

May dawn our present care.

Behold! and do your duty,

Your strains shall never die—

But with your songs of beauty

Gain "Immortality."

W. W. W.

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

CHANGING THE TOPS OF APPLE TREES TO PEARS.

Pears grafted or budded on bearing apple trees is the quickest, surest, and cheapest way I ever grew pears. I never picked better pears from standards or any other undergrowth for the pear than I have picked from old apple trees topped or budded or grafted with pears; and they always bore early and profusely. In large apple orchards, sometimes, and very often are found worthless, scraggy trees; on such I have practised changing to pears. I never failed in two years to get a good crop. In some trees the pear would die out in five or six years, while others were healthy to my knowledge eighteen years, and still doing well the last I saw them, in 1865, in Franklin county, Ohio. To insert but one to three grafts in a large apple top, they will soon smother out and die, and some grafted apple tops (varieties) will not grow pears well from my grafting or budding knives. The more seemingly the top of the apple to the original seedling, in good health, the longer the pear lasts, and the more profitable to the grower. I have only practised this for my own benefit. I have never recommended it, except to scientific grafters or budders. I am practising the same system in my uncertain-looking apple tops. The grafts and buds are all looking well. I never depend, however, on this mode alone. The pear root always for pear orchards for me. I have dwarfs, but would not give one good standard, or one well-set apple top for a dozen of them, unless the pear can be made to take root by the time, or soon after, it comes in bearing.—W. W.

HER MAJESTY'S NAVY.—The *bond-fide* seamen serving in the Royal Navy on the 1st April, 1873, exclusive of pensioners, coastguard men, and men in the Indian troopships, numbered 17,785; the first-

class boys 4,090, and the second-class boys 3,428, of whom 3,381 were in training-ships. The number of first-class boys who entered for the first time in the preceding year was 137, and of second-class boys 3,038; while the total number of *bond-fide* seamen who entered was 514. Among 2,431 seamen who left the service there were 506 who deserted and 960 who were invalided.

## STATISTICS.

IMPORTS OF COTTON.—The value of raw cotton imported into the United Kingdom in November was 4,272,630*l.*, as compared with 4,416,043*l.* in November, 1871, and 2,663,790*l.* in November, 1870; and in the eleven months ending November 30th, last year, 48,838,947*l.*, as compared with 50,526,259*l.* in the corresponding period of 1871, and 46,068,769*l.* in the corresponding period of 1870. In last year's aggregate the United States figured for 23,688,556*l.*, Brazil for 4,528,017*l.*, Egypt for 6,428,768*l.*, and British India for 12,404,744*l.*

EXPORTS OF BEER.—The value of the beer and ale exported from the United Kingdom in the first eleven months of last year was 1,871,005*l.*, as compared with 1,652,817*l.* in the corresponding period of 1871, and 1,693,527*l.* in the corresponding period of 1870. In the total relating to last year the United States figured for 203,390*l.*, Australia for 802,474*l.*, and British India for 475,141*l.* The quantity of beer and ale exported from the United Kingdom to November 30, 1872, was 470,052 barrels.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

PASSPORTS were abolished on the 1st inst. between France and Germany.

DRIFTING ice from the gorges of the Ohio and Mississippi has caused fearful havoc among the boats and steamers on those rivers.

The population of India is found to be 241 millions, and even this large figure is considered to be understated.

WORCESTER CATHEDRAL has now a fine set of chimes, which work by machinery, playing eight times in the 24 hours, and 23 different tunes.

The annual produce of the sale in Paris of annals for food is computed at more than 12,000 francs, or 480*l.*

A new kind of railroad switch has been invented in America. It kills the switchman if it happens to be out of place when the train comes along, thus securing the safety of travellers.

DURING one of the recent gales the principal lighthouse on the island of Anticosta was entirely destroyed, and the keeper, with his wife and six children, perished.

No fewer than six suicides were committed in Paris on a recent Sunday, three being caused by blighted passion, and in each of these cases the pistol was resorted to.

An extensive coal-field has been found to exist in Cape Colony. A pit is actually being worked on a farm in the division of Albert, about 200 miles from East London, and 30 from Berghersdorp.

SHELL MOUNDS ON THE CALIFORNIA COAST.—San Pablo is about fifteen miles from Oakland, and lies almost due north, and the road follows the beach. When within three miles of the town we came to a shell mound, says a traveller, rising up from the plain to almost the dignity of a hill, and which is now covered with a growth of shrubbery. There is no telling when or by whom that mound was raised, but it is almost a mile long and half a mile wide. Fragments of pottery made of red earth are on the surface and near the top; and about two years ago Mr. McHenry, the owner of the land, dug a trench, and at a depth of twenty feet, sixty feet in the west, near the base, found numerous skeletons of Indians of all sizes, and some bones of dogs and birds, and many implements of stone. One baby had been rolled in a monstrously long piece of red silk, like the mummies, and had been covered with a coating of a sort of asphaltum. Mr. McHenry also found in other parts of the hill evidences enough to show that this mound was a burying-place for some extinct tribe of Indians, as the skulls are different from all others known in some particulars. Where the red silk came from would puzzle any one to know, as this must have been a primitive race, judging by the rude implements and utensils. All the skeletons were in a sitting posture, with their faces turned northward. The shells that form this mound are oyster, clam and mussel shells, all having been exposed to the action of fire, and nearly all broken fine. Very rarely are entire shells found. The same kind of mounds, though not so large, are found near San Mateo, on the San Francisco side. They are all near the shores of the bay, and have been made of shells of the oysters and mussels that the Indians used as food, and which they evidently roasted to open.

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## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**LONELY NELLIE.**—Handwriting very good.

**AN UNFORTUNATE ONE.**—It would be certainly desirable to acknowledge the receipt, but not, as we take it, to write in the first instance, unless there were any unreasonable delay in forwarding the money.

**JUNIOR.**—Most decidedly you have a legal claim, and one that cannot be disputed. We suspect that your opponent fears you, and are inclined to think that if you will insist upon your rights he will soon yield all you desire.

**A. H. B.**—Yes, after the engagement is ended it is always the correct thing to return the letters. It is also considered desirable to return any presents that may have been made. As for the other matter we should simply advise you to think no more about it.

**EMERALDA.**—You will readily procure the contrivance you desire at any chandler's; the price, we believe, being about four or five shillings. But to cut the quills with an ordinary pen-knife is preferable, if you once acquire the necessary method. Gold pens are almost as flexible and pliant as quills.

**ANNIE.**—There are several manuals on etiquette published, some of which would supply the entire information you seek. A natural good taste is the foundation of all etiquette, without which indeed all etiquette is only artificial and idle ceremony. The handwriting is good, but is susceptible of improvement; and, for one thing, it is rather too angular in style, at least for the prevalent taste.

**M. A. G.**—Not quite what we require for present use. The sentiment is somewhat commonplace; but that unfortunately is no serious blemish where our recent popular so-called poetry is concerned. We are glad to tell you that the versification is regular and even melodious, and if you have any musical friends perhaps the lines might aptly be set to music. With practice you would be likely to accomplish something good.

**YOUNG DUKE.**—It is hard to say, but we should certainly recommend you to consult some friends on the spot. We should rather fear that the lady designed to slight you; but if you really still care about her, you may derive consolation from the treasured wisdom of a familiar proverb, Faint heart, etc., and patience, perseverance, and the continued affection may do a good deal. Keep up a brave heart; to sigh immoderately over these things is not well. Certainly the ladies play strange havoc with the masculine hearts.

**E. W. W.**—1. In January, 1853 (Jan 29), Louis Napoleon was married to Eugénie de Montijo, at that time Countess of Teba. The civil celebration was performed in the Tuileries by M. Fould, and the ecclesiastical on the 30th, in Notre Dame, by the Archbishop of Paris. 2. Marriage is either a civil ceremony or a sacrament, and no middle course is possible if strict logic be required. The law of England and perhaps we may add the superior law of rationality and of Nature sanctions the former view; while the Romanists and their imitators maintain the latter. 3. Handwriting very fair, and might be rendered capital by a little more careful practice.

**TEXAS.**—If you call upon people with whom you are already fully acquainted, and who are at home, there can be no need to send up the card. If they are out, of course leave the card—a most desirable bit of ceremony, as it attests who has called. We hardly follow your meaning in the other question; but if you send up the card, the people being within doors, and you are then not admitted or received, we should very assuredly take that as the plainest intimation that your company and your calls were not greatly wanted. In such a case manifestly do not renew the visit. But if you refer merely to a card left in the absence of the inmates, it is perfectly regular to renew your visits; indeed there is no conventional necessity to acknowledge the card. As a rule it would certainly not be done.

**MILLON.**—Manifestly your proper course would be to communicate with a music publisher, of whom there are in London many who are perfectly accessible, and whom it would be perfectly in order to address. It is just a matter of business. Concerning your opportunity of doing business by the publication of your glop, that, however, seems to be another affair. It is always difficult to secure a hearing at the outset, and the path to Fame is proverbially a steep one. As it is your first production we fear your chances would be slender, unless the piece is indeed exceptionally good. Under the circumstances we can only repeat our advice, that namely of addressing—strictly in business terms of course—some music publisher. For the domestic affairs you refer to it is obvious that the graceful wording of your letter at-

tests your possession at least of that "cleverness" of which your friends, as you inform us, have thus far held you destitute.

**BERMONDSEY.**—There is a book on the subject called *Isis Reveals* (the title meaning pretty nearly the secret revealed) by Dr. Colquhoun. We fear however that it is out of print. Read also the biographical article on Mesmer in the English Cyclopædia. Mesmerism is based on an intelligible, manifest principle which all must acknowledge who have not the misfortune to be irredeemably stupid; the principle namely of the power of a superior over an inferior or weaker will. But Mesmerism, like everything else, has been caricatured, abused, and sometimes turned to ill purposes; and it has especially suffered from the fact of its having frequently fallen into the hands of charlatans. Mesmer himself was no charlatan; he was not like Gagliostro, a vile cheat trading on the credulity of mankind, and, while he devoted himself to study and to science, he was in comparative poverty. By-and-by the world tried to do his memory tardy justice, the man himself being dead.

**MAGGIE.**—The question you propound is rather a vast one. 1. Telegraphy is necessarily a somewhat mechanical or monotonous kind of work, demanding moreover the closest exactitude. Nor is the remuneration high. Should you still desire to learn it, we may tell you that there are evening classes for instruction which are duly advertised in the newspapers—one, as we believe, in the vicinity of the Old Kent Road, in the S. 2. district, though we fail to remember the actual number—you might easily ascertain. 2. Of course the stage is a preferable line for one who is adequately educated and accomplished. That too like everything else is uphill work, and it would be vain to indulge any sudden "great expectations." But natural artistic ability ever has its ultimate triumph; and so in histrionic matters you might have to begin in the humble line of the ballet; but if clever you might eventually rise to comparative fame—perhaps from a weekly guinea to a weekly twenty guineas. Without intimate knowledge of your circumstances we cannot afford you closer advice.

## CHILDREN FANCIES.

Whither have the fairies gone—  
Fairies robed in green and gold;  
Dwelling in the hills so green,  
Dell and wood, in days of old?  
Dancing on a moonlit ledge,  
Hiding in the hills by day;  
Wearing forms like ladies bright,  
Sitting where the fountains play?

Where are all the fairy gifts?  
Where the brownie's lucky penny,  
Thrown upon the children's path?  
Buying for them toys so many?  
Do they never haunt the woods,  
And the dell and rock and river?  
Is the wild-wood silent now?  
Are the fairies gone for ever?

Ah, our childish faith has fled!  
All those fancies, now so wild—  
Then so beautiful and true—  
Vanish with the little child;  
And the dreams youth loves so well,  
Like that fanciful belief,  
Melt away like summer clouds;  
Gray old Father Time's a thief.

He is stealing dreams away—  
Thoughts and fancies that seemed true;  
Pulling airy castles down,  
Ever building up anew.  
But he brings no faith as pure,  
For all true and bitter things;  
No, with years comes unbelief;  
But the heart to childhood clings.

N. W.

**JAMES H.**, a working man, twenty-three, is desirous of meeting with a loving little life, money no object.

**EDITH**, eighteen, brown hair and eyes, rather tall, and of a loving disposition. Respondent must be dark, of a loving disposition, and fond of home and children.

**FANNY**, nineteen, fair, and considered pretty, would like to meet with a gentleman in a good position, and about her own age.

**EDWIN**, twenty-two, 5ft. 7in., light complexion, handsome, and loving. Respondent must be about his own age, well educated, and of a loving disposition.

**GEORGE**, twenty-four, tall, dark complexion, and in the Army. Respondent must be about eighteen, loving, and domesticated.

**ETHEL**, eighteen, tall, fair, loving, and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, fair complexion, and of a loving disposition.

**JOHN E.**, twenty-seven, handsome, and loving, would like to become acquainted with a young lady who could keep a home clean, and loving.

**MARGARET**, twenty-two, tall, dark, good looking, and of an affectionate disposition. Respondent must be tall, fond of home and children.

**ALFRED**, twenty-five, medium height, dark complexion, and fond of home. Respondent must be about twenty and fond of children.

**TIDDY**, nineteen, good looking, and in a good position. Respondent must be about eighteen, pretty, affectionate, and domesticated.

**LYDIA**, seventeen, medium height, considered pretty, loving, and domesticated. Respondent must be loving, fond of home and children; a mechanic preferred.

**A MANUFACTURER OF CHINA**, twenty-five, 5ft. 10in., with 200l. per year, would like to correspond with a suitable young lady.

**CAPTAIN OF FORE TOP**, twenty-five, 5ft. 11in., flaxen hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, and has a little money. Respondent must be tall, dark, fond of home and music, a good cook, and must not be over twenty-one.

**J. D. J.**, twenty, a housemaid, tall, handsome, dark, curly hair, fond of music and dancing, has received a good education, and has a small income. Respondent must be tall, dark, and able to keep a wife comfortably.

**FRIENDLESS KATE**, twenty, 5ft. 4in., fair complexion,

good tempered, good figure, well educated, domesticated, no money, and an orphan, would like to correspond with a gentleman between twenty and twenty-five, must be of a loving disposition, and able to keep a wife; a schoolmaster or student about leaving college preferred.

**W. T. M.**, twenty-eight, 5ft. 5in., handsome, dark brown hair, and in a good situation. Respondent must be about nineteen, good looking, accomplished, domesticated, and able to keep a home comfortable.

**LUNA W.**, twenty, tall, fair, and would make a loving and affectionate wife. Respondent must be tall, fair, affectionate, fond of home and children, and about twenty-six.

**BEIL**, twenty-two, tall, light brown hair, handsome, and of an affectionate disposition, wishes to correspond with a young lady pretty, loving, domesticated, and fond of home.

**SUBIN N.**, eighteen, tall, dark, brown hair and eyes, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-four, tall, dark, loving, and affectionate; a mechanic preferred.

**E. C.** wishes to correspond with a young female of a dark complexion, and good looking, a domestic servant preferred. "A. B. C." is twenty-two, dark complexion, a good dancer and singer.

**MARTHA ANNIE**, eighteen, tall, fair, abundant auburn hair, gray eyes, domesticated, amiable, and would make a loving wife to a good husband. Respondent should be tall, stout, fond of home, and able to keep a wife comfortably.

**SET SAIL JACK**, 5ft. 6in., fair, blue eyes, dark hair, of a loving disposition, and will make a good husband. Respondent must be good looking, black hair, thoroughly domesticated, and about the same height and not more than twenty.

**ELIZA D.** (Sheffield); twenty, medium height, dark brown hair, hazel eyes, considered good looking, and in possession of a small income. Respondent must be about twenty-three, medium, tall, good looking, and have a little money.

**LAVELY TIE**, WHITE VIOLET, and LONELY NELLIE. "Lively Tib," twenty-seven, a brunette, dark brown eyes and hair, medium height, of a loving disposition, and fond of home. Respondent must be fair, and loving; a tradesman preferred. "White Violet," twenty-two, fair complexion, light brown hair, blue eyes, medium height, and of a cheerful disposition. Respondent must be tall, dark, and fond of home; a mechanic preferred.

"Lonely Nellie," twenty-two, rather tall, dark brown hair, hazel eyes, fair, loving, and considered pretty, wishes to marry a tall, dark young man, good looking, about her own age; a sailor preferred.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

**NESTOR** is responded to by—"Ettie S." twenty-one, tall, good figure, blue eyes, fair complexion, auburn hair, good tempered, and fond of home and children.

**MAURICE D.** by—"Emmie," has expressive dark eyes, is affectionate, considered pretty, and is good tempered and economical.

**BROWN-ETHEL SUSIE** by—"J. H."

**HELENA C.** by—"H. W.," nineteen, 5ft. 7in., is of an affectionate disposition.

**EDWARD** by—"P. T.," twenty-four, nice colour, brown eyes, and wavy hair, would like to go abroad.

**TEDDY S.** by—"Rose E." 5ft., blue eyes, and fair complexion.

**M. D.** by—"J. L.," twenty, 5ft. 7in., dark, and good looking; a Jeweller by trade.

**JENNIE** by—"J. G.," twenty-five, 5ft. 6in., good looking, and has 300l. per annum.

**J. S. G.** by—"Milly," seventeen, brown hair, blue eyes, loving, domesticated, and fond of home.

**HELEN F.** by—"Aubrey Cecil," tall, dark, fond of home, and has a good income.

**LOVING TOM** by—"Rosebud," nearly twenty-two, good looking, fond of music, brown hair and eyes, and very affectionate.

**TED G.** by—"H. E. M.," eighteen, rather tall, brown eyes and hair, domesticated, and very fond of home; an assistant in a shop.

**C. T.** by—"Lonely Eva," eighteen, 5ft. 2in., fair complexion, hazel eyes, and very fond of home.

**NEW ZEALAND** by—"E. L. L.," a respectable widow, forty, who would make him a good and affectionate wife.

**LONELY LOTTIE** by—"G. Barnett," the same age, a seamstress, 5ft. 5in., fair, good tempered, of a loving disposition, and has saved a little money.

**ANNIE** by—"Loving Charley," eighteen, tall, considered good looking, a tradesman's son, and of a very loving disposition.

**CHESTER** by—"Rose," twenty, rather fair, 5ft. 2in., curly hair, good tempered, and fond of home and children.

**MARIA** by—"William," twenty-six, 5ft. 8in., a farmer's son, of a very loving disposition, and would do all in his power to make "Maria" happy.

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